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[DENBIGH'S NEW YEAR.]

## SNOWDRIFT: A STORY FOR CHRISTMAS.

### CHAPTER IV.

She promised, and she has kept her word. What wonders will not woman's love perform?—*Elia*.

EIGHT days passed.

Various festivities were indulged in at Highfield Lodge, Derbyshire, but a cloud rested both upon Mrs. Fearon and her son. Denbigh had not told his mother a syllable respecting the extraordinary midnight visitor who had with such consummate impudence and unabashed effrontery exacted the very large sum of two thousand pounds from him, but he had taken her into his confidence respecting his passion for Leonie; which, indeed, amounted to an infatuation, which is another word for madness. This it was which had caused the cloud to hover over Mrs. Fearon.

We have said that she had taken a dislike to Miss Layland from the first; why she knew not, and she could not overcome her repugnance to the marriage which her son was determined to contract, in spite of all opposition.

She had begged him with tears in her eyes to pause and reflect, she had entreated him almost on her knees to renounce Leonie, but he was obdurate, and at last he wrung a reluctant consent from her to receive her as a daughter-in-law, although her compliance caused her to weep bitter tears of anguish when she was alone, though before the young people she simulated a joyousness the hollow nature of which could be plainly seen beneath the thin disguise of the mask she wore.

Leonie was radiant.

Her happiness seemed complete. There was nothing to dash her joy with the dregs of the bitter cup. She lavished affection upon Denbigh, in return for which he made her costly presents, though his heart at times misgave him.

His mother's warning words rang in his ears, and he feared that after all, and in spite of Leonie's solemn denial, there was some secret understanding between her and the midnight intruder who had robbed him of his money with such well-bred ease and masterly assurance.

It was arranged that Leonie Layland should return to London after the Christmas week and make her preparations for a marriage with Denbigh Fearon, who was to follow her in a day or two and seek her at her lodgings, the address of which she gave him with every appearance of good faith.

Consequently, on New Year's Day, Denbigh, leaving his mother at Highfield Lodge, went up to town, hoping soon to be a married man and the happy possessor of Leonie's hand and heart. He had promised to communicate Leonie's decision to his mother and send for her to be present at the wedding, which he was desirous of having celebrated as soon as possible; his intention being to take his lovely bride abroad and visit all those Continental scenes and cities which have been admired and wondered at by generations of travellers.

Leaving his portmanteau at a Bond Street hotel where he was in the habit of staying, he drove to Miss Layland's lodgings, all the more anxious to see her, for he had received no letter from her since her departure from Highfield Lodge, an interval of three days.

Paying the cab fare, he knocked at the door and inquired for Miss Layland, and, with a sharp cry, staggered against the door-post as the person who answered the summons informed him that she had quitted the house that morning, and the people did not know when she intended to return, if it was her intention to come back at all.

Seeing that he was ill, the woman, who happened to be the landlady, asked him to walk inside and sit down.

He gladly accepted the invitation, which was very welcome to him, as he was in danger of falling; and,

walking like one in a dreamy state, resembling the faint, dazed feeling one has after rising from a long confinement to a sick bed, he followed his conductor into a neatly furnished sitting-room, and sank into an arm-chair. He tried to speak, but his efforts were unsuccessful. The words obstinately refused to come from his lips, and he sank back, making a sign to the landlady, a Mrs. Morecombe, that he could not speak, and should be glad to listen to her. She was not at all backward, for garrulity was her forte.

"Miss Layland, sir," she said, "has not lodged with me long, consequently I do not know much about her. It is true that she gave out she was going to be married when she first came, and was only waiting until she and her future husband were a little better off. You see, sir, she was prudent, because it is not wise to marry until you can keep up a home, as I know to my cost, having suffered dreadfully with my first husband, who struggled hard to make both ends meet, and died under it, poor fellow! But that's neither here nor there. Miss Layland's intended, Mr. Hardress—Guy she called him—a nice, civil-spoken, handsome young fellow—"

She paused abruptly, for Denbigh, at those words, presented such a ghastly appearance she thought he was going into a fit. He made more convulsive efforts to speak, his eyes rolled fearfully, he clenched his hands and stamped his feet, and looked more like a madman under the influence of his malady than a rational being.

Mrs. Morecombe hastily poured some brandy into a tumbler and made him drink it, which seemed to have a sedative effect upon him, for he became calm and able to articulate faintly.

"Go on," he said.

"Pardon me, sir, for breaking off as I did," continued Mrs. Morecombe. "I thought you were going to be ill. Where was I? Oh! talking about Mr. Hardress. It appears, from what I could under-

stand, that a relative had died and left him some money—two or three thousand pounds, I believe—and on that they are going to marry. I'm not sure that the marriage is not to take place to-morrow, but where I don't know. That they did not tell me, though it was not for the want of fishing for the information that I did not get it. Miss Layland has gone to an aunt of Mr. Hardress, so they told me, where she will stay until the wedding, and then they're off to some foreign land. That's all I know, sir, and you're welcome to the intelligence, if it's any good to you, which I am afraid it isn't. I'd forgotten one thing," she added, "and that is a letter I've got for a Mr. Fearon, if that's your name. It's here somewhere on the mantelpiece, and I'll give it to you."

Denbigh stretched out his hand, and Mrs. Morecombe reached over to the mantelpiece, handing him a letter, which a glance showed him was in Leonie's writing. It was with the utmost difficulty that he could with his trembling hands tear open the envelope; but he did so at last, and read the following cruel lines, as well as his swimming eyes would let him:

"Mr. Pons Poynter, I will not ask you to forgive the wrongs I have had recourse to in order to obtain a marriage portion, though if you love me, as you have often assured me you do, I hope you will extend your pardon to an act which was prompted by love alone, though I could not bestow my affection on you. And why? My heart was already given irrevocably to another. We were poor, and it is necessary in this world to have money in order to enjoy existence. I did not try to diminish my conduct; it is open to reproach on every side, and I believe it to be a sin to play with such a heart as yours. Try to forget if you cannot forgive me. There are women in the world more beautiful than you thought me, and infinitely more worthy of your love. Guy Hardress, who took from you your money, only acted in obedience to my instructions, and in accordance with a preconcerted plan arranged between us. I am equally culpable with him. What a queen of hypocrites you will call me! I deserve your abuse, but I would have done more than I have to gain the man I love and live with him in silence. We both thank and are devoted to you. In a few days I leave this country for ever, and that you may forget the unpleasant incident in your life to which she has given rise is the prayer of  
"LEONIE."

For a few minutes after reading this letter Denbigh Fearon sat like one suddenly turned into stone. He could see now what a miserable dupe he had been. Everything was as clear as daylight. Leonie Layland had gone to the ball, at which he met her, in order to meet some young and susceptible gentleman like himself, who might become in love with her charms; that was the first part of the plot. The second developed itself gradually, and it was easy to arrange the midnight robbery on Christmas Eve when Leonie had established herself as a visitor at Highfield Lodge.

To find that he had been so egregiously deceived was more than Denbigh could bear. The shock was beyond his strength to endure, and, with a peculiar sound, half sob, half cry, he sank back in the chair and became insensible. Mrs. Morecombe was much alarmed. She felt his pulse, which was motionless, and smoothed the damp from his cold, pale forehead, which resembled marble. The application of smelling-salts was unavailable to restore him to consciousness, and she sent for a doctor, named Poynter, who lived a short distance from her own house. He was prompt in making his appearance, and, after a few inquiries, he speedily elicited from Mrs. Morecombe all the facts of the case with which she was acquainted.

Leonie's letter, which was still held in a tenacious grasp by Denbigh, and which the doctor with difficulty loosened from his encircling fingers, supplied the gaps in the landlady's narrative, and a shrewd man like Doctor Poynter was soon in possession of the material circumstances connected with the little history, of which Leonie was the heroine and Denbigh Fearon the hero. His sagacity in this instance was aided by a slight knowledge he had of Miss Layland, to attend whom, during a short illness, he had been called in a few weeks back. He did not, however, appear to take much interest in the case until, by looking at the envelope of the letter Leonie had written to Denbigh, he saw it was addressed to Mr. Fearon. Then he started and turned pale, and, regarding the young man attentively, he muttered:

"It is the same. It must be her son, for he has her features."

After this remark he proceeded to take some blood from Denbigh, and had him placed on the sofa. He speedily recovered, but no sooner had he regained his senses than he began to groan and show symptoms of relapsing into his former state. Dr. Poynter administered a stimulant to him with his own hands, which put new life into him, and he looked curiously at his medical attendant.

"You are strong enough now, Mr. Fearon," said the doctor, with an encouraging smile, "to listen to what I have to say to you. My name is Poynter. I am a doctor, accidentally called in to attend to you, and it will, I have little doubt, surprise you to hear that I am acquainted with some particulars of your family history, that I also know the cause of your present prostrate condition, and that I can cure your mind, which is really more to blame than your body for the state you are in."

"If you can do that, doctor," answered Denbigh, with a melancholy smile, "you are, indeed, a good genius. But now, I already feel so much better that I will listen to you, and, while hearing what you have to say, hope that the age of miracles has returned."

"In the first place, my young friend, you are in love," said Dr. Poynter. "It is useless to deny it. Miss Leonie Layland is very beautiful, and you are so to be accused for giving your heart to such a fair enchantress, who, however, was making a tool of you all the time. Leonie is to be married to Mr. Hardress, who is nothing better than a robber and a thief, and if your passion has survived the rude treatment to which it has been subjected I will undertake to bring Leonie to your feet, and to prevent the celebration of the marriage which you appear to dread."

Denbigh Fearon started up, and, seizing the doctor's hand, wrung it heatedly, saying:

"Do that, and you will save my life—do that and I shall be eternally indebted to you!"

"Empty phrases, my dear sir," answered the doctor, gravely. "I shall require something more substantial from you than a few heatedly spoken words, the commonplace utterances of a warm heart."

"If you want money—"

"I have sufficient," said Dr. Poynter, interrupting him. "It is not money I shall ask of you in return for the happiness it is in my power to confer upon you; but tell me whether you still love Leonie. I should have thought your love would have turned to hate."

"Not at all. I ought to hate her. Heaven knows she deserves my bitterest resentment!" replied Denbigh Fearon. "But the fact is, doctor, I love her more intensely now than there is a prospect of losing her than I did before. You may call it a strange perversion of intellect, but intellect, in my opinion, has nothing to do with affairs of the heart. Women make fools of the wisest and cleverest men. I repeat, I love this woman to distraction. I adore her, and the bare thought of her becoming the wife of another maddens me almost beyond the power of endurance. I think I could stab the villain who has stolen her from me, even if he were standing in front of the altar. Can you help me? Are you merely trifling with me? For pity's sake, do not make merry at my expense at such a time as this! My head throbs now as if I were about to be attacked by fever of the brain."

"I tell you," replied the doctor, calmly, "that the marriage shall not take place between the man Hardress and your adored Leonie, always provided that you comply with my terms, which you will not find so onerous as you may expect."

"It is not enough that she shall not marry Hardress, I want to marry her myself."

"You shall do so, and within a week."

"Your terms! Name them!" cried the young man, wildly. "If you demanded the surrender of my soul you should have it."

"Now that we are approaching matters of business it is necessary that we should both be calm," said Dr. Poynter. "I dine early to-day. You have fasted since morning. Come with me to my house, which is not far off. Recruit the inner man, and after dinner we will enjoy a confidential conversation, which will lighten your heart many degrees, and define the relations which are in future to exist between us."

Denbigh Fearon made no objection to this proposal. He arose and drank some more brandy which Dr. Poynter pressed upon him. They thanked Mrs. Morecombe for her kindness, and went away together, Denbigh leaning upon the doctor's arm, for he was still very weak, and his head felt rather dizzy. He had been shaken to the foundation of his system

by the strong emotion which Leonie's unlooked-for flight had called into existence.

## CHAPTER V.

THE dinner which Dr. Poynter gave Denbigh Fearon was of such an appetizing, recherché character that he did justice to it. His spirits also rose with the expectation of again meeting Leonie and regaining her lost love, while the furniture and surroundings of the doctor's elegant home recommended themselves to a man of taste, and the excellent wine which he produced tended to further exhilarate him.

When dinner was over the doctor produced some claret of a celebrated vintage and a box of cigars. He drew his chair near the fire, and requested his guest to do the same, while he stirred the coals into a cheerful blaze. When their glasses were filled, and their cigars lighted, an appearance of comfort reigned everywhere. The frosted glasses which covered the gas jets shed a subdued light, which was warmly reflected by the handsome moireen curtains which draped the windows.

Denbigh Fearon began to look upon the doctor as his best friend, and exclaimed:

"I have to thank you very much for recovering me from the miserably low and despondent state in which I was when you found me. If you had not come and poured the warm sunshine of hope into my desolate heart, I do believe I should have committed some rash act—perhaps suicide perhaps."

Dr. Poynter smiled, and paused ere he replied. During this pause Denbigh had an opportunity of observing him. He was a tall, thin, hard-featured man, upon whose lips a cynical smile not usually whitening. He was a man who had been subjected to sorrow. The traces of suffering were legible upon his massive brow and the lines of his face. He was a man of intellect and resources, however, and that confidence in himself, and this confidence extended itself to those with whom he came in contact.

Denbigh felt perfectly at his ease with the doctor, and had a firm conviction that Leonie would again be his.

"Before I communicate my terms to you," exclaimed Dr. Poynter, withdrawing his excellent Havannah from his mouth, "I will recount certain particulars of family history which you heard me speak very casually just now. Your mother was courted by two men—one a commercial gentleman named Fearon, who subsequently became her husband; the other, a medical student in those days, who shall be nameless. She had vowed to love and marry the student, but the wealth of the man of commerce beguiled her from her allegiance, made her forgetful of her promise, and caused her to forsake the one she loved for the worldly advantage the other conferred upon her. She married Fearon, and the medical student vowed that he would be revenged. They have never met since, the student and Mrs. Fearon. The marriage was a happy one for a few years, during which time two children, both boys, were born. You were one, but your elder brother was stolen when an infant from his nurse, and has never been heard of, though he may be known at any time by the mark of a cross which is visible between his shoulders."

"The disappearance of this child occurred during an absence of Mr. Fearon, who was obliged to make a voyage to the Persian Gulf on business. The vessel on board which he had embarked met with bad weather off the African coast and foundered, all hands being lost—at least, such was the account at the time; but reports were current that some of the passengers and crew were saved, landed on the coast, and taken into slavery by the wild tribes residing in that part of the world. Your mother gave your father up as dead; but she is not now satisfied whether he is actually dead or a captive in Africa. Mr. Fearon made you his heir in the event of your brother's death, before he left, and as your brother disappeared, and your father is supposed to be drowned, you inherit his property under his will."

"You astonish me," said Denbigh Fearon.

"I intended to do so. You may rely upon it, though, that the facts are as I have stated them," answered the doctor, relighting his cigar, which had gone out while he had been speaking. "And now, with regard to my terms. I undertake to prevent the solemnization of this marriage, so hated by and as detestable to you, between Leonie Layland and Guy Hardress; and I further engage that Leonie shall be yours within a week from to-day. Here," he added, drawing a sheet of paper from his pocket, "is what you must put your signature to. I drew it



up while dinner was in course of preparation. Read it and tell me frankly, and without reservation whether it will be possible and agreeable to you to subscribe it."

With trembling hands Denbigh took the paper and read what is subjoined:

"I, Denbigh Fearon, hereby swear to on one occasion, and one occasion only, whenever and wherever I may be called upon, obey the order or command of Dr. Poynter, to whom I am deeply indebted, and to this solemn undertaking I, as a gentleman and man of honour, subscribe my name."

"Give me a pen!" he cried, eagerly, when he had finished the perusal of the obligation.

"Stay a moment. Do nothing in a hurry," exclaimed Dr. Poynter. "Have you fully considered the terms of the agreement?"

"I have; and I am willing to append my signature."

"Very well. In that case," said the doctor, "sign the document, and the compact is made between us. You fully understand that you are my bond-slave on one occasion; that is to say, I have the power of commanding you to do my bidding, and you must obey, even if that order should oblige you to commit the crime of murder."

Denbigh Fearon shuddered.

"I fully understand," he replied, repeating the doctor's words, "and I am perfectly content to run the risk. Whatever you tell me to do on one occasion that will I perform, at any risk, and regardless of all consequences, so help me all the powers infernal!"

Dr. Poynter gave him a pen, which he dipped in an inkstand, and he hastily wrote his name across the half-sheet of paper, which the doctor held to the fire for a moment, and then returned to his pocket.

"That is well," he said, "you are my bond-slave. The time is not yet come for me to require your services, but remember that you will be a wilfully perjured man, and one whom I would strike as I would a dog, if you do not keep your oath. I feel that you will not fail me, however, and I have so much confidence in you that I will, without any delay, proceed about your business. I have an idea that the district in which the happy couple intend to be married is not far distant from this spot. It will require the whole of this evening for me to make researches, and perhaps the best part of to-morrow morning. Finish your cigar, my dear boy, and excuse me for turning you out. I have work before me. Leave me to do that work, and return to your hotel with a contented mind, for what I have promised that, will I perform!"

Denbigh Fearon threw his cigar into the fire, and, springing up, exclaimed:

"Not a moment will I delay you, doctor. Let me take my departure at once. At what time shall I see you to-morrow?"

"At ten o'clock, at this house."

The young man shook him enthusiastically by the hand, looked up gratefully in his face, and took his departure, returning to his hotel with a light heart and a hope in the future he would not have supposed that he could have had, if anyone had predicted his present state of contentment, when he was stricken down at Mrs. Morcombs by the heartless letter which Leonie had addressed to him, in all the insolence of her prosperity and successful love.

Punctually at the time appointed he arrived at the doctor's house after having passed a good night. His appearance was less wild and haggard than it had been. The day before he resembled a condemned man for whom the scaffold waits, and who has no hope. To-day, if not radiant, he was calmly confident, and the hope which springs eternal in the human breast welled up like a stream in the desert. To his annoyance, the doctor was not at home, and he had to wait more than a half an hour before he came in, yet such was his belief in him that he was satisfied he would come. During his absence he walked up and down impatiently, only stopping to look out of the window to see if he were coming up the street. At length the welcome click of a key in the lock was heard, and the doctor entered, followed by a man dressed in black, who halted respectfully on the threshold.

"This," said Dr. Poynter, indicating the stranger with a gesture of the hand, "is Detective Morse, who wishes to hear the particulars of the manner in which you were put under contribution to Guy Hardress. He is armed with full powers for his arrest, but it is as well that he should hear all from you."

In a hurried but circumstantial manner Denbigh Fearon informed the detective how he had been robbed by Hardress, and compelled to give him two thousand pounds. Morse suggested that the woman

was an accomplice, and should be arrested as well as the man. To this Denbigh at once demurred.

"I have reasons, the nature of which you can guess," he said, "for not wishing to take any proceedings against the lady. Why should I make any secret of it? I love her, and am perfectly willing to make her my wife in spite of her perfidy. In fact, I love her madly. I promised the man Hardress that I would take no proceedings against him, but I consider that recent circumstances have altered the case materially—so much so, indeed, as to release me from that foolish promise, which was extorted from me chiefly by the entreaties of Leonie. Had I been alone, had he only threatened my life, I would have defied him. It was when he was coward enough to say he would kill the woman I loved best in all the world that I gave way, for I would rather have sacrificed the whole of my fortune than that a hair of her head should be injured."

"I understand, sir," said Morse. "The lady shall not be touched. The man, I presume, you will give evidence against. He is safe to get two years' penal servitude, if not more. It is his first crime, I think, as I know most of the old hands, and have never heard of him before."

"That is settled," cried Doctor Poynter. "Come to the church. We have no time to lose. It is ten minutes to eleven," he added, looking at his watch.

"Have you discovered the place where the ceremony is to be solemnized?" asked Denbigh, his eyes sparkling with joy.

"I know all," answered the doctor, curtly.

Without another word he led the way into the passage—thence into the street, where a cab was waiting. The three men got in, and were rapidly driven to the north-western part of London.

Denbigh Fearon did not talk much, his excitement was too great. Occasionally Dr. Poynter addressed remarks to the detective, and appeared to be giving him instructions. It was about half-past eleven when the cab stopped in front of an unpretending-looking church in a far-off suburb. The horse was covered with foam, owing to the pace at which it had progressed. A few people were standing outside the church door, and it was evident that something was going on inside.

Dr. Poynter and the detective entered first, and went up an aisle, followed by Denbigh. At the altar was the officiating minister. A man and a woman stood before him. Though their backs were turned towards him, a glance sufficed to show Denbigh that one was Leonie and the other Guy Hardress. A few friends of the couple were grouped near, as is usual in such cases, and the clergyman was reading the service in an indifferent, droning voice.

Morse looked at a pair of handcuffs to see if they were in a fit state for use, then he glided up to the altar like a snake. Dr. Poynter remained near the church door to prevent escape in the case of any failure on the part of Morse to arrest his prisoner. As for Denbigh, he shrank back into the shadow of a pillar, as if afraid to contemplate the actual result which he might expect shortly. The detective, having reached the altar rails, laid his hand heavily on Guy Hardress's shoulder, just as the clergyman asked him if he would take "this woman to be his wedded wife." The answer "I will" was trembling on his lips when Morse exclaimed, in a loud voice:

"I arrest this man, Guy Hardress, on a charge of felony, and forbid the marriage to proceed!"

Had a thunderbolt fallen into the church the consternation of all those within its walls could not have been more complete than it was at these words. Leonie blanched and utterly lost her self-possession. Hardress alone had a proper sense of his danger, and, without waiting to argue the point, pushed the officer on one side, and, evading a clutch he made at him, ran like a deer down an aisle.

It happened he selected the one in which was placed the pillar behind which Denbigh was concealed. From his hiding-place he had watched what was going on, and when Guy Hardress came by he dashed forward, and, seizing him by the collar, held him in a vice-like grip.

A terrible struggle ensued, and the sacred edifice resounded with fierce cries, like those of savages engaged in mortal combat. Now they swayed this way, dashing up against the woodwork of the pews; anon they rolled against the wall. Guy made frantic efforts to escape, and would have done so had not Denbigh possessed the strength of two men at that moment.

Suddenly Guy made a very powerful effort, and threw off Denbigh's grasp, but he did so at the ex-

pense of his coat and under garments, for Denbigh held him by the collar so firmly that, with the wrench, the man's clothing gave way, baring his shoulder, which, by the light streaming in from a neighbouring window, was plainly visible.

On it was the mark of a cross!

Utterly stupefied by this revelation, Denbigh fell back, half-fainting, murmuring the words:

"Great Heaven! can it be my brother?"

Unconscious of the interest which this discovery had created in Denbigh Fearon's breast, Guy Hardress made another effort to escape, and would have succeeded had not Morse, who came up at the instant, struck him a violent blow which felled him to the ground. In another moment the handcuffs were round his wrists, and, panting with rage, he was obliged to own himself a prisoner. Leonie stood like one turned into stone, Denbigh Fearon was not much better. The clergyman looked on vacantly, while the spectators were stricken dumb with astonishment.

It was a strange scene, and one full of interest.

## CHAPTER VI.

DR. POYNTER was now the guiding spirit. He gave orders that Guy Hardress should be taken to the nearest police-station, and he was dragged away, panting and uttering wild cries against his destiny. He was but paying the penalty of his crime, still he deemed it hard to have the cup dashed from his lips at the moment of triumph. No one knew how cleverly all his plans had been laid. He had at an infinite risk gained possession of a large sum of money, which he was going to share with the woman who had helped him to get it, and whom he had long loved, and that very evening they intended to leave England as man and wife and sail from Liverpool for America. We repeat, he deemed it hard that his expectations should be frustrated, and it was no wonder that he raved like a madman as he was ruthlessly hurried through the streets to the cell in which he was to be confined, with a long captivity in prospect, ungladdened by a single kind word or compassionate glance from her he loved.

When Guy, shrieking and struggling, had been taken away Dr. Poynter explained briefly to the officiating minister what had occurred, and the church was ordered to be cleared, which was instantly done.

When Denbigh Fearon and Leonie were sufficiently recovered to be removed they were placed in the same cab, the doctor accompanying them, and driven to his house. Leonie was the first to recover her self-possession, and when the house was reached she addressed the doctor, asking him whether he was conducting her, and by what right he acted.

"Enter instantly," he replied, with an indignant glance, "or share the fate of your accomplice. You are in my power, and unless you want to join Guy Hardress in prison you must obey my orders. Of course you are at liberty to choose between comparative freedom and luxury and the serge dress of the jail, the low diet, the loss of your hair, and the hard, drudging labour to which you would be compelled to lower yourself."

Leonie's delicate and fragile frame was convulsed with a shudder at the prospect held out to her by the doctor, and the only reply she made him was to enter the house at once. Having showed her into the drawing-room, Dr. Poynter returned for Denbigh, whom he assisted up the steps and led into the room where he had left Leonie, saying:

"There is the woman you loved. She dare not refuse any request you may make, because you can if you choose, prosecute her as an accomplice of the man Hardress. Ask her to be your wife, if you will, and she must comply, though if you take my advice you would rather warm a viper on your hearth than her, after the way in which she has treated you. That, however, is your affair, and I shall not presume to sway you one way or the other. I intend to leave you together, and if either of you require my services be good enough to ring that bell, and I will attend upon you."

Denbigh Fearon sat down and peered into the fireplace. At that moment he was thinking more of the poor man whom he had consigned to a felon's jail than of Leonie. Often had he been told that his brother had the mark of a cross between his shoulders, and if the shrieking creature writhing in the detective's grasp should, indeed, be his mother's eldest child he himself was but a usurper, and prosecuting Guy for taking what of right belonged to him.

The reflection made him uneasy. He determined

not to breathe a word respecting the discovery he had made to a living soul, lest he should be turned out penniless on the world's charity.

"But 'er," he thought, "let Guy suffer the horrors of penal servitude. Rather let him taste all the bitterness of severance from the joys of life, and separation from her he loved, than I should be exposed, by my own act, as an impostor."

What he had seen that day in the church, when grappling with the man he thought his brother, he resolved to keep a strict secret, and his heart hardened.

Some time passed, and he seemed oblivious of any one's presence. Suddenly he heard his name pronounced and looked up. It was Leonie. She, too, had been thinking. She, too, had reflected, and the love she had borne Guy Hardress in his prosperity sank away before his disgrace, as does the snow and ice before the balmy breath of the west wind and the heat of the noontide sun.

"Have you taken such a hatred to me that you will not speak?" she exclaimed. "Oh! if I could but recall the days we have passed together! You do not know me, Denbigh."

He shook his head sadly and dubiously.

"No, no, no!" she cried, with all the vehemence of her passionate nature. "I repeat, you do not know me. I am not what you take me for. In your eyes I appear a hypocrite of the most detestable kind, but you are unaware of the pressure that was put upon me. I have acted lately under coercion. I communicated with Hardress, from Highfield Lodge, when your good mother and yourself were so kind to me; under coercion I was forced into writing a letter to you and in going to the church with him this morning. He had threatened to kill me if I did not obey him in all things, and he exercised a fascination over me which is incredible, if not attributed to the agency of magic, or, as we should say in these days, magnetism. Believe me, I breathe more freely now I am removed from the sphere of his influence, and congratulate myself upon the escape I have had."

Denbigh Fearon regarded her earnestly.

Was she a consummate actress, or was she, as she stated, the dupe of a clever man, who exercised a mastery over her weaker senses and made her his slave?

Her sensuous eyes were moist with the rising tears, her hands clasped together, her body extended as if in supplication, and her lovely face—oh! so lovely, though in grief—wearing an expression of entreaty, which to him was irresistible. He was so young in the world's ways, he knew so little of womankind, and never before had a woman begged him to believe her with tears in her eyes. To see a woman weep, and especially a beautiful woman, was for him to be conquered; he could resist no longer. He arose, advanced a few paces, hesitated, advanced again, and, stopping before her, exclaimed:

"Have I, indeed, saved you, Leonie? or do you wish to betray me a second time?"

"There is no fear of that. The burning shame with which the recollection of my first enforced deception fills me is sufficient to kill me. If you will once more trust me, and keep him away from me, I will be very good and faithful. My deception was not my fault. He heard of my intimacy with you, he planned the robbery, he commanded, and what had I to do but obey?"

"Was your heart mine—mine all the time?" asked Denbigh.

"Ever yours," answered Leonie, earnestly. "It is yours unreservedly and devotedly now, but if that man were to come near me again I could not answer for my stability. Oh! it was magic. How I despise and hate him! Let him take the fate he merits, and I will live to make atonement to you whom I have so deeply wronged."

The next moment she was clasped firmly in his arms and strained to his breast, whilst she called him her dearest Denbigh, and he covered her lips with caresses and obliterated the traces of tears from her wet cheeks.

A reconciliation was thus effected between Leonie and Denbigh, who was again devoted to her, and firmly believed everything that she had told him. She renewed the vows that she had broken. When they went for the doctor, Denbigh introduced Leonie as his affianced wife.

"You will scarcely credit me, doctor," he said, with a smile, "when I tell you that all is explained satisfactorily. Miss Layland has consented to be my wife, and is rejoiced to think that through your instrumentality she has escaped a life of misery. The events of the last few days are like the exciting

scenes of a melodrama, but to us, at least, all ends happily."

The doctor congratulated them in a few words, but took occasion to say to Denbigh:

"My work is done. Remember your oath!"

Denbigh Fearon trembled, he knew not why, and, turning away, sought relief in the smiles of Leonie. The latter appeared to have quite forgotten Guy Hardress. Having escaped from the influence she alleged he held over her, she seemed happy in avoiding anything connected with him and his memory. He was poor, and in difficulty. Denbigh was rich and could make her happy; and such was the adaptability of her versatile disposition that she threw him off as she would an old glove and allowed his rival to bask in her smiles.

It was arranged that Denbigh and Leonie should be married at Highfield Lodge by special licence, and Dr. Poynter agreed to give the bride away.

On the day following the dreadful scene in the church, Denbigh took her down to Highfield, and gave her into his mother's charge.

Mrs. Fearon attempted again to dissuade her son from contracting an alliance with a girl who had treated him so badly, but she pleaded in vain, and she loved him too much to remain obdurate. Accordingly Leonie remained at the lodge in charge of Mrs. Fearon, while Denbigh went back to town to prosecute the man he believed to be his lost brother.

The law deals only with facts, and when it was proved, and not denied by the prisoner, that he had in a most audacious manner robbed Denbigh Fearon, of Highfield Lodge, in the county of Derby, gentleman, he was found guilty.

The money was given up, and, as nothing was known of the culprit's previous career, he was sentenced to the mitigated penalty of two years' imprisonment with hard labour.

As Guy Hardress was being led from the dock by the officers of the court he turned to Denbigh Fearon and exclaimed, with a menacing gesture:

"The day will come when you will repent your share in this transaction, and I warn you that a woman who will betray a man once will not hesitate to do so a second time should it answer her purpose."

These words sank deeply into Denbigh Fearon's mind, but he did not make any answer, nor did he show any emotion. He was happy in the possession of a large property, and also in the enjoyment of Leonie's love. What more could any man want? This was the question he asked himself, and he went away contented.

After the trial Doctor Poynter, by the express invitation of his young friend, as he called him, went down to Highfield Lodge on a visit, the object being to be present at the nuptials of Denbigh with Leonie Layland.

Christmas was over, but winter had not yet given place to spring, and the weather was inclement.

Mr. Fearon and Leonie received him in the drawing-room, where blazed a large fire. It was evening when they arrived, but the room was well lighted.

Leonie flew to Denbigh's arms and kissed him tenderly.

There were traces of suffering on her face though she might have been a shade paler than usual. The fate of Guy Hardress, who had been her affianced husband, and with whom she had even stood at the altar, did not seem to affect her in the least, though she must have seen the report in the papers, as it made no little stir at the time.

Dr. Poynter introduced himself, saying:

"I believe I am correct, madam, in supposing that your son has been obliging enough to mention the name of the friend whom he has brought to your house? If so, permit me to say that I am Doctor Poynter. I have little doubt that if our young friends were not so agreeably occupied, Mr. Fearon would do me the honour of an introduction to yourself."

Mrs. Fearon bowed, and muttered to herself:

"Where have I seen that face before? Oh, the memories of years gone by! Can it be an accidental resemblance? Poynter! No, that was not the name. Oh, be still, my heart! I did not think that an occurrence of long ago could so greatly affect me now. Sir," she said, "pray excuse my son for his remissness, his unfortunate infatuation"—here she lowered her voice—"has strangely altered him. You are very welcome, and I hope that your stay will prove agreeable to you."

"Of that I am quite sure, since I am to have so amiable an hostess," he rejoined.

"Oh, do not think of me!" Mrs. Fearon replied,

quickly. "This is not my house. When my son marries, perhaps I shall not stay here. I may not be allowed. Thank goodness, I am provided for. I have my jointure."

They conversed on indifferent topics for some time, when the doctor said:

"Pardon me, Mrs. Fearon, but I wish to ask you a question. May I?"

"Certainly. You are a gentleman, and my son's friend. Why should you not?" she replied, fearlessly, and yet her eyes sank before his earnest gaze, she knew not why.

"Do you remember Arthur Wainwright?" he said, and his gaze became yet more searching.

This speech had an extraordinary effect upon Mrs. Fearon, who threw up her arms, crying:

"Tis he! 'tis he! The sin of my youth is coming—is come home to me!"

And with these words on her lips she fell forward and became insensible.

(To be continued.)

#### A HOME WITH FOUR SIDES.

A CITY home has its walls of stone,  
And its windows clear and fair,  
Its solemn parlour, richly clad,  
Its hall and its dizzy stair.

But it has no sides, where the loving sun  
May peep here and there all day;  
Its windows back look on gardens small,  
In front look—across the way.

But the little home where the roses run  
At will over angles four,  
And a double share of the sunshine comes  
To lie on the cottage floor.

A home with its fragrant orchard side,  
And a side toward the forest too,  
An outlook over the winding road,  
And one for the mountain blue.

Its trodden paths, quite around the house,  
Where the patter of childish feet,  
In a mimic hunt, or a quick surprise,  
Shall be sure on the round to meet.

Its side-lights dim through the trailing vines  
That brighten the walls within,  
Its nooks where moonlight peers awhile,  
And the crickets softly din.

Ah! twice a home, as it seems to me,  
Is the country-built nest,  
Where its windows open north and south,  
And open, too, to the east and west.

E. L.

**A FEMALE PATRIARCH.**—A Mrs. Elizabeth Thompson, of Smith County, Texas, born in 1776, a widow of the war of 1812, has living eight children, 70 grandchildren, 100 great-grandchildren, and 15 great-great-grandchildren—total 193.

It was reported at the last meeting of the Corporation of the Sons of the Clergy that during the past year 239 clergymen and 187 widows and single daughters had been assisted by grants, 298 children towards their education, and that 712 other widows and aged single daughters had received pensions.

The preliminary soundings for the tunnel which is to unite France and England are now being actively carried out near St. Margaret's Dover, and the engineers conducting the work are stated to be entirely satisfied with the results obtained. It is intended to put down two pneumatic tubes, and ventilation will be secured by providing a current of air.

**SERGEANT BATES IN CANADA.**—We learn from a Canadian paper that Sergeant Bates, the "flag-flyer," who favoured Old England with the sight of himself and his banner with the "strange device" of the stars and stripes, has had an attack of authorship. He has published one book and is engaged on another. Not satisfied with having caused "one million Englishmen" to show their love for America and thus averted war between the two nations, he is now bent upon making ten thousand Canadian hearts beat responsive to the symbol of American good-will. But the Canadians do not take kindly to his banner. His journey from Detroit to Montreal was to occupy about ten days, when he would consider as to the desirability of extending his patriotic march to Quebec. At one town—Chatham—a deputation waited upon him and advised him not to attempt to fly his flag there, as it would be torn to pieces. Although "he can talk a mile a minute," he failed to convince the denizens of Chatham, and concluded to leave that town out of his programme.





[VALERIA'S PRESERVER.]

## HE LOVES ME: HE LOVES ME NOT.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Maurice Durant," "Fickle Fortune," "The Gipsy Peer," etc., etc.

### CHAPTER XXVII.

IN the second or so that elapsed between the springing of the two figures and the descent of the cloak upon her Valeria realized that she had been the victim of a ruse and that she had been lured to death.

With a frantic effort to escape she threw up her arms and struggled madly and with such unexpected strength that the two desperadoes were for the moment astounded.

Then Valeria heard a sharp oath hissed out, and the words:

"Strike now!" She felt rather than heard the click of a stiletto drawn from its sheath, and, with a sudden spasm of resignation, sank on the cold stones.

She waited for the stroke—a second elapsed, and then, with a sudden crash, something alighted near her.

There was a sound of men's voices raised in subdued exclamations and oaths—a groan, the noise of blows struck and returned, and then a dull, heavy crash upon the stone pavement.

With frenzied haste she tore the cloak from her face and head, sprang to her feet and saw, instead of the murderous, uplifted weapons of her assailants, a tall figure standing beside her, wiping the blood which flowed from a wound on his forehead.

As she stood motionless, staring with affrighted eyes, and thinking, perhaps, that her senses had deserted her, the stranger raised his eyes and, seeing her free, hastily whipped out a mask and slipped it before his face.

Then, with a dignified and courtly gesture, pointed to a dim something lying on the ground a few feet distant.

She followed his indicating finger and shuddered as she distinguished the motionless and prone figure of one of the would-be assassins.

Then the stranger and deliverer held out his right hand and motioned with his left to a gondola, which a gondolier had silently guided to the landing-place.

Valeria gazed with commingled sensations around her, then raised her wondering eyes to his face.

"How can I thank you?" she exclaimed, breathlessly, her hand pressed to her bosom, which was rising and falling with emotion. "Sir, you have saved my life! Oh! why do you not speak?"

The stranger shook his head and stooped to pick up her mask, which, still silently, he held out to her. She took it, but was too much confused and agitated to fasten it before her face.

With a significant gesture he intimated that she was to do so, and, wondering more every moment at all that had occurred, she, with hands that trembled for the first time, slipped the mask on.

Then once more the stranger waved his hand towards the gondola.

Valeria shrank back for a moment.

The stranger waited, his hand outstretched.

"Are you deaf and dumb?" she cried. "Speak—I beseech, I implore you! Sir, be generous as you are brave, and tell me to whom I am indebted for my life. They would have murdered me—for what reason I know not—if you had not saved me! Speak, sir—signor, I implore you!"

There was no word; the hand alone repeated the request or command that she would go with him.

Valeria advanced a step, then turned to the gondolier.

"Is your master dumb?" she asked, in despair. "Can he not speak or hear? Where will you take me? Oh, if I could only know what to do!"

The man stood as motionless as a statue, and just as silent, his eyes fixed on his master with a calm look of obedience.

Valeria, with a sudden decision, placed her hand in the outstretched one of the stranger.

"I will trust you, signor," she said. "You have saved my life and you cannot mean me harm. I will go with you!"

His hand closed on hers and, with an inclination of the head, as if he would say that it was well she had so decided, he led her to the gondola, and, with a gentle care, seated her under the curtained canopy, arranging the cushions comfortably round her.

Then he seated himself at some little distance from her and gave the signal to the gondolier, who instantly sent the gondola flying through the water.

As the gondola left the landing-place there emerged from the dark shadow a man, who, unseen and unsuspected, had watched the whole scene, from the moment of the murderous attack to the disappearance of Valeria and her deliverer.

As he came into the lamplight his cloak fell from his arm and disclosed the white, cowardly face of Lord Ellsmere.

"Baulked, by Heaven!" he muttered, with chattering teeth. "Baulked, and by him too! I knew him in a moment. But," he added, with a fearful oath, "I'll overreach him yet and pay him for this night's interference!"

When the first lamp threw a gleam upon the water and the boat Valeria opened the curtain and looked eagerly at her companion.

His mask was still on, but through the holes there flashed a pair of eyes soft with so deep a solicitude and wistful regard that a thrill ran through her.

That thrill was not lessened when she saw that at her gaze the lower part of his face, which was not concealed by the mask, flushed a bright crimson, then as suddenly paled.

The next moment they had passed out of the light and all was obscured again.

In breathless silence Valeria sat and waited.

The gondola at last came to a stop, and, looking up, she saw the familiar lamps of her own lodgings.

A sigh of relief escaped her lips, and was not unnoticed by the stranger.

He leapt from the boat and held his hand to assist her.

Her own trembled as it came into contact with his, and as she stood and looked at him her voice trembled also.

"You will not speak, signor," she said, "but I must. At least you will not rob me of the delight of knowing to whom I owe my life. You are brave; be courteous! I ask only one word—you cannot refuse it—your name!"

He shook his head, and the eyes looking down at her through the mask seemed to smile sadly.

"Surely," she said, and the tears of vexation, wounded pride, and the over-brimming of a grateful heart, sprang to her beautiful eyes, "surely, signor, you are not ashamed of the noble deed you have done. You need have no fear that I shall blazon it to the world and make you the hero of a night-adventure!"

She paused and for a moment she thought he would speak, but though his lips moved no sound issued thence, and, stung to the quick, she said, hurriedly:

"You were almost about to speak! Do you know me? You knew I lived here—perhaps you know—did you write this or not?" and she eagerly searched in her bosom for the letter which had lured her to the dark and dreadful corner.

The letter was not to be found; doubtless it had

slipped from her bosom during her struggles with her assailants.

With a cry of vexation she said: "I have lost it! Did you write it? Oh, answer me, I implore! What do you know of this mystery? Who are you?"

The stranger for answer stooped, and with gentle reverence picked up from the ground her cloak and arranged it over her shoulders, then, with the significant gesture, held out his hand and pointed to the steps.

"I will not go!" said Valeria, with sudden, genuine passion. "I am no child, signor! I am a woman, and I know what you have done for me! I should be lower than the brutes to let you go unthanked—unknown! On your honour as a gentleman, I, a woman, bid you enter with me! You cannot refuse!"

She stood with outstretched hands, her eyes, dimmed with tears, looking upon his masked face—there were command and a sweet entreaty mingled in her tones, and they should have moved a stone.

They did not move the mysterious deliverer.

With a mournful but firm shake of the head he took her hand and led her up the stairs, then, bending low, as if with a sudden impulse irresistible, pressed his hot lips to her hands and turning suddenly stepped into his gondola.

The next instant it had moved from the landing-place, and Valeria saw it gliding slowly away.

With a sigh and an exclamation of bewilderment she ascended the stairs and dropped upon the couch in her own room.

It was quite dark; she sprang for a match and lit a lamp.

Then she dropped the cloak from her waist and turned to the glass—a woman's first movement after every event of importance.

Her face was white, her heart beating fast.

She raised her hand to unbutton her corset, and shrank back with a cry of horror.

Her hand was red and wet with blood!

Was she wounded?

Eagerly she looked at her face, but white as wax, felt her bosom and her neck.

No, she was unhurt, unscathed.

Then a deep crimson flush sprang to her face, and a thrill of strange, mad delight and exquisite pain ran through her frame.

The blood was "His!" her brave deliverer's!

Oh, sweet, oh, awful thought—he had bled for her!

She remembered now the awful wound upon his forehead.

She remembered in the dreadful moment of consciousness that she had seen him wipe the blood away.

And he had borne all his pain without a word, with a calm, serene face; he had borne it for her sake, and here upon his hand, the hand his noble lips had kissed, was his blood!

She looked down at it and shuddered and thrilled with the mysterious sensation; loth to wipe away the stain which seemed almost sacred to her.

Who was he? What a strange, ay, and sweet mystery it was!

"A villain balked is twice a villain," says an old English proverb, and it was exemplified in the person of Lord Horace Ellsmere.

He had engaged in the plot against Valeria Temple's life with the most profound fear and cowardice; he had skulked to the dark corner to witness the assassination with trembling limbs and a face as white as a plaster cast, but when he saw his plot overthrown, one of his desperadoes put to flight and the other stretched lifeless on the pavement, his cowardice gave place to a hatred and malice which in their malignant disappointment were ready for any desperate means.

At the first glance he had taken the individual who had so courageously rescued Valeria for an officer of the guard, but when he turned at the moment of wiping the blood from his face, which was uncovered for that instant by the mask, Lord Ellsmere recognized the man whom he felt instinctively was his natural antagonist and foe—Edgar Raven!

Had Edgar Raven been a small, undersized man the cowardly villain would have rushed upon him, and made one desperate effort to effect his ends, but Edgar's stalwart form struck fear into the schemer's breast; and, besides, there loomed at a little distance the grim figure of the gondolier.

There was nothing for it but to wait and watch, torn by a thousand fiends of disappointed rage and impotent malice.

How to account for Edgar Raven's presence in Venice, and, worst of all, his appearance at that unfortunate moment he could not imagine; it was enough for my lord that the deliverer was there and that his vile and cruel attempt to murder the

Lady Florice was for the time frustrated. He listened with a thirsty intensity for some explanation, which he doubted not Edgar Raven would at once vouchsafe.

What was his astonishment at the scene which ensued!

Edgar Raven, the man who so miraculously rescued the intended victim, refused to speak a word of any kind, but acted in every way as if he had lost the power of speech.

Lord Horace thought for the moment that he must have lost his senses. Then it flashed upon him that for some reason or other Edgar Raven was desirous of concealing his identity from Valeria, and if that conjecture was the true one he had succeeded, for it was evident to the eye that Valeria had no idea that the deliverer was her old friend Edgar Raven.

Lord Horace watched them pass, as we have seen, they went off in the gondola, then, with a tempest of rage and disappointed anger in his heart, returned to the inn.

Entering the room which served as a private sitting-room, he found his faithful dog sitting at the table, with his head hanging upon its jaws.

A half-emptied bottle of champagne was on the table, and Lord Horace, seated at the bottle, with a sigh, took his own glass, thirst, and with a weak chuck he aroused his confederate.

Slogder jumped up, with his bloodshot eyes half-opened, and caught the back of the chair with an instinctive step towards offence or defence, for a hand upon his shoulder usually suggested a denunciation and arrest.

"Silly, guv'nor! it's you, is it?" he exclaimed, hoarsely and eagerly. "Is the job done, eh? All done, guv'nor?"

"No," replied Lord Horace, bitterly. "Your mistress was under a mess of it; the girl has given me the slip again."

Slogder uttered an oath.

"It shouldn't have been! I'd had the dog of it, guv'nor! These fellows are idiots! I ought to know they'd have made a mess of it. Why didn't I rig the plant myself? What's to be done, guv'nor? How far as the job goes?"

"Too far for our safety," replied Lord Ellsmere, walking up and down the room. "Too far to stop where it is too. One of your fellows lies like a log with his head out open, and the other is—Heaven knows where! There—don't ask questions—the thing's spoilt, and there's enough of it. The best thing's to do is—"

"Now to make ourselves scarce," said Slogder. "I'll pack up, guv'nor, in a jiffy, and we'll clear out! Got his head broken, eh? Well, serve him right, for a chap that can't put a girl like that out o' the way without her squeaking for the p'lice is wus nor a idiot!"

And, with this philosophical expression of opinion Slogder left the room to make instant preparation for their departure.

Lord Horace continued his feverish pacing for some little time, then he paused suddenly, and with a sudden exclamation struck one hand against the other as if an idea had occurred to him.

"By Heaven, that will fetch them both!" he exclaimed. "Let me work it out. Of course! What an idiot I am not to have seen it long ago! But it's too wonderful almost for belief! I see it all now. Edgar Raven is in love with my mad-cousin, Lady Florice—alias Valeria Temple—alias Signora Flori. He proposes and she refuses him, or she accepts him and they quarrel. He leaves London—I remember now that he did suddenly and mysteriously too—and comes to this place to keep quiet and get over it. She, woman like, thinks all the better of him, and wants to make it up. She follows him. By this time his fancy for her has cooled, and not being anxious to renew the acquaintance he changes his name. His sudden appearance on the spot to-night was a coincidence—an accident. He couldn't have known anything of the plot or he would have been on the spot sooner—another minute, and he would have been too late!"

"Now what follows? Let me go through it: before she has time to recognize him he slips on his mask, and so that she may not do so by his voice he remains silent. By that I can depend upon his concealing his identity throughout. Perhaps he will leave the place to-morrow. No, he would not do that. He can't very well if he is settled here, and in any case I must prevent him."

"Now the next thing. Neither of them will make any fuss or stir about the matter, for this reason—that both of them are under assumed names, and any investigation of the attack would make their own affairs too public."

"No—I'm an idiot to be frightened; they can't—they can't possibly move in the matter. But I can,

Thanks to that visit to the Castle, thanks to the old port and that garrulous old idiot, Ford, I have the key to the mystery in my possession."

"Edgar Raven, the man she loves—the man who rescued her from assassination—is the man of whom she is in search. There's the key, and if I have half as much brains as the fellows at the club give me credit for I can open the front gate of Ellsmere Castle with it and let myself in as lord and master!"

"And this is how I'll do it: Edgar Raven having kept himself unknown, suppose I change places with him? I'll be Edgar Raven, and I'll drop my lady a little note. Let me see—"

And, drawing a chair to the table, he leaned his hot head in his hands and thought.

Then he opened his despatch-box, and, after making a number of drafts, produced a letter to his satisfaction.

This time he destroyed the drafts by burning them to ashes, and, with the germ of his plot gradually expanding into a full-blown scheme of villainy, retired to rest.

The morning broke in all the splendour of a Venetian sunrise and the three persons in whom we are interested were awake early enough to witness it.

Lord Horace had spent a restless, dreamful night, and looked upon the better for his attempt at repose. He had arranged with Slogder that it would be better to remain at the inn rather than excite suspicion by immediate flight.

There was little fear of the two desperadoes returning there, as they would naturally keep away from the inn and hang about the streets; and for their purpose Lord Horace and his ally could not have found a more suitable lodging.

As early as the vapour-hung Lord Horace, wrapped in his cloak, sallied into the street.

He knew something of Edgar Raven's character, and had rightly conjectured that the artist would be out early.

The first place he repaired to was the artists' rendezvous.

There he found the canal and streets alive and crowded already; artists lounging in the balconies or lying full length in their gondolas; the faint perfume of roses tingling the air, and the flitting to and fro of the models sufficiently indicating the profession of the occupants of the old ruined houses and palaces.

Taking up his position under a friendly portico, Lord Ellsmere watched each door and each gondola; but no Edgar Raven appeared, and with a patience and perseverance which would have surprised his fashionable friends, the earl repaired to the next place of espionage.

That was the cathedral of St. Mark.

It was the fashion in Venice to make an early promenade in front of the bronze horses, and he hoped to find Edgar Raven there and track him to his residence.

But though there were numbers of promenaders, the stalwart figure of Edgar Raven was not amongst them, and, much disgusted, but as determined as ever, Lord Ellsmere turned his face towards the sun.

On his way he passed the flower market, and, thinking himself safest in a crowd, he mingled with the flower girls.

As he passed on he stopped suddenly, with his heart in his mouth, for there, within a dozen yards of him, stood Edgar Raven himself.

He was buying some flowers of a girl, and the unusual look of interest on his face told Lord Ellsmere for whom the flowers were intended.

With a smile he treasured up the fact for future use, and, keeping Edgar in sight, drew farther into the crowd.

After the flowers were arranged, which they were with great nicety and under his own direction, he gave the girl a gold piece, and, stopping her outburst of thanks with a kindly smile, turned away.

As he moved Lord Ellsmere moved, and the two passed out of the market place together, the one dogging the other's heels, and, while taking the greatest care to remain hidden in the crowd, never removing his eyes from Edgar's broad-brimmed hat, which rose above the heads of the rest of the throng.

Edgar Raven reached the canal, where his gondola was waiting, and, embarking, was immediately moved away.

Lord Ellsmere called a gondola, and, slipping a gold piece in the man's hand, simply pointed to Edgar's boat.

The gondolier, with a grin, signified his comprehension of what was required of him, and, with an appearance of carelessness, kept Edgar's boat in sight.

It stopped at the Palazzo of the Doges, and Edgar, after giving an order to his man, passed up the stairs and out of sight.



Lord Ellsmere did not commit the folly of stopping his man, but allowed him to take him some distance farther on, then stopped him and said:

"I have made a mistake. That's not the person I wanted. I thought a lady entered the gondola?"

"No, signor," said the man, with a shrug of the shoulders. "The good signor entered alone."

"Why do you call him by that name?" asked Lord Ellsmere.

The man made an expressive gesture with his hands.

"Because, signor, he is good to the poor," he said.

"And he lives there?" asked Lord Ellsmere.

"Yes," replied the man. "The good signor lives there. It is the Palace of the Doges. He is an Englishman and an artist. Do you not know him, signor?"

"No," said Lord Ellsmere, "and have no desire to," and with a nod he left the boat.

He had attained the object of his morning walk—Edgar Raven's address.

One step of the difficult road had been gained, and with renewed and feverish ardour Lord Horace returned to the inn.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

To Valeria the sunrise, as it pierced the stained windows of her room, brought a sharp sensation of mingled pleasure and pain.

With a thrill of delight she awoke to the consciousness that she was alive—to the remembrance that her life had been saved by an unknown, mysterious hand.

She rose, and, while she dressed, determined to keep the affair a secret, even from Madame Leclaire.

"If I tell her only of the attack I shall inspire her with constant and mortal dread every time I leave the house, and if I tell her all she will insist upon our leaving Venice. And that," she added to herself, softly, and with a rising colour, "I cannot do at present."

Then she sighed, for there rose before her eyes the remembrance of the night in London when one—no mysterious deliverer, but a handsome, noble-minded man—had saved her from a similar fate. Where was he?

When she reached the breakfast-room she found Madame Leclaire full of her last night's opera, and so engrossed in the account of it that she did not notice the unusual flush on Valeria's face and the new light in her beautiful eyes.

"I wish you had been there, dear," she said, "to hear the cry of disappointment which arose when the manager announced that it was quite uncertain whether you would sing again. How did you amuse yourself last night? I am afraid you were dreadfully dull."

Valeria flushed and raised her fan.

"No," she said. "I cannot say that I was dull. I found enough to amuse me. It seems that there is always enough of romance and incident in this wonderful city."

Madame Leclaire smiled.

"Not much romance now, dear, I think, excepting what may be found in the associations of the place. The days for abductions, plots and assassinations have long gone by. The city has a capital police, and there is no more romance in it than in London."

"Do you think not?" said Valeria, scarcely suppressing a smile, as she thought of the deadly attack of the preceding night.

"Yes," said Madame Leclaire, "although that reminds me that the old man you were so interested in is full of news this morning. He tells me that a man was found last night, not far from here, by the Bridge of Sighs. I think he said fairly wounded."

Valeria's flush of excitement gave place to a sudden pallor.

"The police seem to think that it was the result of a drunken brawl, which it appears happens pretty frequently here. It is such a pity that Italians are so free with their stilettos and pistols; they are more passionate than the northern nations, and—"

At that moment the old man entered, and Valeria, looking him full in the face, placed her finger on her lip.

The old man, with Southern sentences, understood at once that she wished him to keep secret her part of the preceding night, and answered her with a smile and a slight tap on his heart.

Madame Leclaire finished her sentence without noticing the exchange of signals, and the old man, advancing, presented a letter on a silver salver.

Valeria took it, and, glancing at it quietly, placed it beside her plate.

Madame Leclaire smiled.

"A letter from the manager, I guess, dear," she said. "I told you he would let you have no peace unless you consented to sing for him again."

Valeria knew it was not from the manager, for in the glance which she had bestowed upon it she had seen that it was directed in a strange hand.

"Well," she said, "he shall not worry me at breakfast, for I will not open it."

Madame Leclaire laughed.

"You will have to sing," she said, "mark my words!"

"We shall see," said Valeria, absently, and she rose with the letter in her hand and left the room.

In her heart was beating the wild hope that it might come from the man who had saved her life, and that it contained an elucidation of the mystery of his resolute silence.

She turned the key in the door of her own room, and with the letter in her hand seated herself in an easy-chair.

"At least," she said, with a sad smile, "I can be comfortable while I read my mysterious correspondent's missive. It is addressed to the Signora Flori; he knew me then. Ah, I am too fast at my conclusions! Let me see if it does indeed come from him," and with a strange palitation at the heart she tore open the envelope and unfolded the letter.

Scarcely had she glanced at it when she had sprung from her feet, her face white and agitated, a bewildered look of surprise in her widely opened eyes.

The first line was no other than her own name.

"To the Lady Florice Ellsmere."

With a tightening of the lips the beautiful girl clenched the letter with a firm hand and read on.

"LADY FLORICE,—

"Be not astonished at this letter or incredulous of its contents. The writer is your friend. Should you need confirmation of this assertion look back no farther than last night, and admit that he who saved your life can be no enemy or evil-wisher. Lady Florice, for reasons which are all sufficient, I hid my face and my voice from you. It is not well for either of us that you should know me. The time has not yet come when you can clasp my hand and call me friend. Let me in a few words prove myself your friend by giving you plain instructions for your conduct. They are more than instructions, they are commands. Dare not to disobey them, as you dread the consequences here and hereafter of a broken oath.

"Florice Ellsmere, I know all. I know the object of your wandering, the purpose of your life. It is near attainment. Here in Venice is the man you seek, the son of the man who blighted your mother's life the son whom you have sworn to ruin. If no feeling of duty, of sacred fulfillment of your solemn oath, prompts you to your task, let personal desire for redress spur you to revenge. The man for whom you seek was the prime mover in the plot against your honour and your life. I saved you from a fate worse than death, and in return I ask—I demand—only that you be faithful to your vow.

"Seek not to know his name, doubt not that he is the one upon whom your vengeance should fall. Remember the sign, and, if you still doubt, offer it to him when you meet him face to face to take your revenge.

"If you would know the time and place at which you may gain your object follow my instructions. There is an open place to the south behind the Rialto. If you have the courage for which I give you credit you will assume male attire—a cloak and hat will disguise your sex sufficiently—and repair to the square to-night at the hour of twelve. Your foe shall meet you there to give you the satisfaction I will demand in your name. No word must be exchanged with him or with any during the meeting. A case of pistols will be produced by the writer of this note, who will be present to see that you come to no harm through trickery or unfair means. At the hour of twelve to-night. Do not fail! Your honour, your vow, demand that you should take the opportunity which fate has given you.

"Ask no questions, seek to know nothing of him who now writes to you, but come to the Rialto alone and masked, and take your revenge.

"AN UNKNOWN FRIEND."

Valeria's hand fell to her side.

Was she dreaming or—could it be true that here in Venice and to-night she should meet the man who had attempted her life, the son of the man who had ruined her mother, and take her revenge?

True! Why should she doubt it?

What interest had any one in her affairs? Why should this letter be written to deceive her? It was too precious for that. Some cleverer lure would have been held forth.

No, the letter was from a friend, who had rescued her from the hands of her unknown enemy, and who had placed it in her power to gain the object of her life.

As she pondered the blood rushed through her veins, her eyes dilated, her heart throbbed; once more

she could hear that shrill dying voice bidding her swear, swear, to keep her vow—once more she saw the wan livid face working with the desire for vengeance—once more heard the story of a life wrong, and as she thought that here, within a few hours, she should keep her vow and clear the dark shadow from her life, she clasped the letter to her breast and, looking up, exclaimed:

"Mother, I will be true! I have not forgotten. To-night I will keep my vow, and you shall be avenged. What matter if I die? If he succeed in killing me, instead of my slaying him, I shall have done my best, I shall have lost my life in the pursuit of my task, and you will be satisfied. I will go. Mysterious foe—son of the man who has cast so deep a shadow on my life, to-night we settle accounts. Your hired daggers were near my heart last night, to-night we stand face to face, life for life."

To return to Edgar Raven.

After parting from Valeria at the door of her hotel he had returned to his own rooms and given himself up to the raptures and tortures of an unsatisfied passion.

He had rescued the idol of his heart from the daggers of assassins, and yet he had not the right to pierce the motives which could prompt any one to play the murderer's part.

There was the cruel thing for him to bear.

He loved Valeria Temple as madly as a man could love a woman, and he had no right—nay, was absolutely forbidden by Valeria herself—to pry into the mystery which surrounded her or to seek her presence!

For hours he paced the room, or lay on his couch like one possessed.

One moment his heart was racked with love for Valeria, at the next tortured by a thirst for revenge upon the vile unknown who dared plot against her life. For he knew that the attack was not one made for plunder. The man he had knocked down had his dagger raised right above Valeria's head, and no man would risk his neck by downright cold-blooded murder for the sake of a few trinkets.

No! there was an unseen hand moving behind the curtain, and the two desperadoes were mere tools, hired butchers.

With an exclamation Edgar Raven rose to his feet. "I'll find him! I'll hunt him down, if I turn all Venice into confusion. The police, the military, are my friends! I will, I say, I will find him, and hang him like a dog. Oh, it maddens me to think that I saw her alone, struggling in the hands of two vile, crawling reptiles whose very touch would defile a dog. Alone! Ah! what did she do alone in Venice at night? Was there an assignation? No, no; I will not think it! She is as pure as the lily, as gentle as the dove!"

His voice broke down, and he covered his face.

The old servant entered with a letter.

"For you, signor. Ah! no breakfast yet. Oh, signor, you will break my old heart! You look so ill—so ill!"

"Give me the letter and leave me," said Edgar.

"Go—go, good soul—go!"

And he snatched the letter from the salver and paced the room.

Glancing at the address, he shook his head and flung the letter on the table.

He did not know the writing, and judged the envelope to contain some circular or bill.

Then he drew a chair to his writing-desk and commenced a letter to the police.

As he did so his eyes fell upon a paper which lay on the top of the desk.

He took it up and read with a delirious delight the paragraph which recorded the discovery of a wounded man near the Bridge of Sighs.

"Not likely to recover! Ah, if I had had only the sense to place it beyond doubt. I ought to have stabbed him with his own dagger, the cur! But I will have his master yet. Ah! if I spend my life in the search I will find the man who dares plot against the life of the woman I love!"

He fell to pacing the room again, and his eyes catching the letter, he had thrown on the table he took it up and mechanically broke the seal.

An exclamation burst from his lips, and he read on with frenzied eagerness, which gradually gave place to a deadly calm, fearful in its intense thirst for blood and revenge.

The letter ran thus, and was in the disguised hand of Lord Ellsmere:

"MEDDLESOME IDIOT!—This comes from the hand of the man with whose purpose you have interfered and whose plans you have balked. You stepped between me and my prey last night, but you shall not always do so. I have sworn to have the girl's life, and I will keep my oath. If you are the man I take you for, if you have the courage to do so, meet me to-night at the hour of twelve in the square south of

the Rialto. Come alone and masked. Do not speak—words are unnecessary. A sign is sufficient—that sign you know! If you do not, watch me when you see me first and in me recognize the foe of Valeria Temple and Edgar Raven. Seek not to discover my name—it is hidden from you for ever. Should I fall, leave me where I lie, and if my bullet pierces your heart—as I intend that it shall—I will do the same by you. To-night, at twelve, I wait near the Rialto—come! Bring your own weapons. Remember, not a word! I speak not, but act!”

Thrice, with tightened lips, Edgar Raven read the mysterious challenge.

Then he took the letter to the window and examined it.

It was in English, the handwriting was English—the writer must therefore be an Englishman.

He knew Edgar Raven—at least by name—he had been near the Bridge of Sighs and witnessed the attack and rescue!

That fact was enough for Edgar Raven and at once moved him to a decision.

He would accept the challenge. He would meet the vile reptile, unworthy as he was of an honest man's steel or bullet, and leave the result to Divine justice.

With calm heart, in which burnt the steady fire of a desire for the blood of the man who had dared to poison Valeria with his touch, Edgar took out his pistol-case and examined the weapons.

They were a pair of modern saloon duelling pistols, accurate in their adjustment, deadly in the hands of a good marksman.

With a smile of concentrated devotion to the one idea, Edgar nailed up a card—the five of diamonds—to the wall of his studio, and, loading one of the pistols, took aim at twelve paces.

He practised on the card for two hours, and at last succeeded in piercing the middle diamond six times out of the ten.

Then, with deliberate nicety, he cleaned both pistols and, loading them, replaced them in their case.

What remained for him to do was to dispose of his property in case of his falling to the murderous fire of his opponent.

With a rapid pen he drew up a paper, directing that all he had should be sold, that one-half of the proceeds should go to the old servant who had served him so faithfully, and the remainder to his gondolier, Fidelio, who had indeed verified his name by his faithful, unquestioning ob-dience to his master's slightest command and his steadfast affection.

"Poor fellow!" said Edgar to himself. "He is the only one in the world, excepting old Francesca, who will be sorry if I fall! Well, the money will make them both comfortable for life—the pictures alone will do that. And now—now I think I have set my house in order. Is there anything else?"

Yes, there was one thing else, one word more to be spoken, and that to her for whom he was about to risk his life, one word to the woman he loved.

He drew the paper towards him and wrote:

"VALERIA—By the time this reaches you I shall be no more. I come by my death fairly, and I desire that no stir shall be made concerning the manner of it. I write this, so to speak, with death staring me in the face, and, therefore, should this reach you it will have the solemnity of a dying man's earnestness. With all that solemnity, I beseech, I implore—nay, I command you, by the right which my love in life gives me—to be on your guard! I have reason to know that an enemy thirsts for your life! Be watchful, be suspicious, and if you by chance can find a clue do not rest until you have the foe at your feet.

"Into the mystery of your life I dare not pry—would to Heaven you had given me the right to do so! I have loved you to the last, Valeria. If there is love in Heaven I shall not cease to love you there. Farewell, Valeria! Watch, for your life depends upon your care and vigilance. Heaven have you in its keeping! Farewell!"

"EDGAR RAVEN."

This letter he put into an envelope, which he directed to the Signora Flori. This envelope he enclosed in a second and then rang the bell.

"Francesca," he said to the old woman, "here is a letter I wish you to take charge of until to-morrow. I am going out of the city, and if I return to-morrow before the hour of ten I shall ask you for the letter. Should I not you will open the envelope and send the enclosure to the person to whom it is directed, I know that I can depend on you, good Francesca."

"Signor, what is there I would not do for you?" replied the old woman.

"But this service, which, though it may seem slight to you, is a great one. There is the letter—take care of it. Inside my desk is a paper. It is the one sealed with red wax. There are directions for

you and Fidelio. Bah! my good Francesca, what ails you?"

"Signor," cried the old woman, clasping her hands, "where art thou going? what wilt thou do—"

"Nonsense!" cried Edgar, with a laugh, meant to reassure her. "One would think I were starting for the field of battle against the Austrians. Where am I going? I am going to spend the evening out—to meet a friend!"

(To be continued.)

## OLD RUFFORD'S MONEY; OR, WON WITHOUT MERIT, LOST WITHOUT DESERVING.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Fighting for Freedom," etc., etc.

### CHAPTER LIII.

DESCENDING from the rickety chair the detective picked up the writing-case.

"I'll just take a peep into this," said Lynx, "and keep it for a farther search at leisure."

Joe held the lantern, while Mr. Lynx went over it packet by packet, glancing at the papers, and restoring each bundle to its former resting-place as he went on. They did not yield much information, consisting principally of envelopes and addresses, loose memoranda, and letters from dupes of all descriptions.

Mr. Lynx was wearying of his task, and Joe had yawned more than once in sympathy, when the packet, having been glanced at and returned, the desk, or flat side of the case, alone remained unexplored.

Mr. Lynx was looking at it with a puzzled air, when Joe observed:

"I know the secret o' that. Shove in that little brass knob by the hinge there, and then draw out the pin at the side—it'll come open then."

Mr. Lynx pressed the knob and released the pin, which in turn released the velvet-covered flap.

"That's it," said Joe; "that's the little book. I was afraid he'd be takin' it with him."

"That's what?" asked Mr. Lynx, somewhat annoyed as he turned over the leaves of white, red and blue blotting-paper, and shook out two or three memoranda of horses and odds, each of which he looked at and put down.

"That's it, I say," repeated Joe, in an obstinate tone. "I say, again, that's it. Give it to me."

Joe turned the leaves over slowly, with an eager but perplexed air.

Lynx watched him attentively. Suddenly his features brightened.

"Hooray! hooray! I've found it!"

"Found what?"

"I'm no scholar, Mr. Lynx; but I'd know it agen with half a eye. Look here," and he displayed on one of the white leaves of the blotting-case the reversed facsimile of the fatal memorandum.

Mr. Lynx examined it in silence.

"Look at it t'other way, sir," said Joe, innocently, and, taking up the book, he selected the leaf and exposed it as a transparency.

Lynx laughed heartily.

"What do you think o' that?" cried Joe, in the tone of a village showman after a successful card trick. "Didn't I tell you I see him blot off that very identical bit o' paper, as he said 'nd bring young Reginald to the gallus, and bring his old father's gray hairs to the grave?"

"Didn't I tell you, Joe," said Mr. Lynx, drily, "I'd make your fortune? A still tongue makes a wise head. Don't you know too much, Joe, or you'll break your neck at it."

Joe subsided. He knew he was guilty in the eye of the law, and that "conscience, which makes cowards of us all," checked his exultation.

"Not a word, Joe, about this paper. Not a word, Joe, mark you, until it's submitted to our betters. Mr. Serjeant Wilkins, the counsellor, must have this, and show it to the judges. It's not matter for such as you and I to meddle with at present," and he put back the book, with an air of assumed gravity, into the desk, replaced the pin in the slot, passed the strap round the case, and without another word rose from his seat at the table with the prize under his arm.

"We'll fasten up this place for to-night, Joe," said Mr. Lynx, after a pause. "And we'll come here to-morrow by daylight and complete our search. We've done enough for the present."

They departed, and, leaving the miserable region by way of Saffron Hill and Hatton Garden, turned into Holborn.

"Joe," said Mr. Lynx, "you'll not forget my caution. Not a word about what we've just discovered."

Joe muttered an assent.

"And now, Joe, I think we may as well part till to-morrow. You can find your way to Brompton, I suppose. I've to put this"—and he tapped the writing-case—"away safe. I'll see you to-morrow at half-past ten. Good night, Joe; not a word about what we've found, you know—good night," and Mr. Lynx, crossing the road diagonally, got into an Oxford Street omnibus.

Joe's temper was somewhat riled. He felt himself snubbed. He didn't think Mr. Lynx's behaviour what he called "pretty." Then he bethought himself that Lynx had told him he had a warrant for him about the railway business, and he saw it would not do to offend him while in his power.

"Still," he argued, "he might have behaved a little civiler. But never mind—who knows? my turn may come yet, although Mr. Lynx is so bounceable. I thought Bridoon was going to punch his head this morning for his precious cheek, and I wish he had now. He'd ha' done it to rights for him. But he caved in in time. Never mind, Mr. Lynx; I owe you one—it's on the slate too. I shall just tell Mr. Bridoon everything I know, and be guided by his advice. So put that in your pipe and smoke it," soliloquized Joe Paget, as he bent his way to his hospitable protector's domicile at Brompton, where he made a full, true, and particular report of his evening's adventures, and the discovery of the facsimile, not forgetting Mr. Lynx's ungracious behaviour to himself.

This last rawawakened the anger of Mr. Bridoon, who thereupon gave a very unfavourable opinion of Mr. Lynx's manners, calling, and general conduct—a quotation of the proverb about whom to set to catch a thief, qualified by the admission that he was "a ——— knowing fellow, and much better known nor trusted."

As to Mr. Lynx, he certainly did not make haste to place his prize under lock and key. He had no intention of the sort. He simply cut poor Joe's company to take himself and the writing-case to Eaton Square, where he well knew how he should be welcomed.

In an hour he was in Squire Frankland's library, and there displayed his discovery to his gratified employers. Observing, in his own person and in his own story, his solemn caution and advice to poor Joe, he did not say a single word that implied that person's agency, or even presence, upon the occasion.

On the contrary, like Cicerianus, the burden of his speech was, "Alone I did it, I!" and accordingly the egomet being taken literally, Mr. Lynx pocketed the whole of the kudus as well as the coin pertaining to this achievement in the "secret service" department.

Affairs now moved with accelerated speed. No time was lost in bringing up Ephraim Ferrett before the magistrates at Bow Street, and, Mr. Lynx having collected his evidence, that "sublimed of rascals" was placed at the bar, where he had more than once previously figured, to answer a more serious charge than he had yet encountered. So well had the secret been kept that the general public knew nothing of Ephraim's capture or the nature of the charges against him, or indeed his connection with the "great bank robbery case" of Reginald Chesterton.

Accordingly the parties more immediately interested had convenient space to hear or to take part in the proceedings.

Never was a prosecution better supported, and never did a case run more smoothly and conclusively, thanks to the shrewd and practical leading counsel engaged. Mr. Lynx identified his prisoner Mr. Bowman as Ephraim Ferrett, who had some years previously been committed from that court for stealing a will relating to a large fortune left by a gentleman of the name of Rufford, and wherein the Chesterton family were interested.

Then he produced the record of half a dozen convictions for misdemeanour, followed by short terms of imprisonment, several of which were not served out, owing to the consummate hypocrisy of the prisoner, who imposed upon the prison chaplains and authorities by his feigned penitence and well-simulated reform.

Finally he came to the proof of his being the principal in the robbery and forgery for which Reginald Chesterton was now a prisoner in Newgate awaiting trial.

Mr. Lynx's culminating point was the production of the blotting-case already mentioned, which he merely mentioned as having been discovered by him in a search of the prisoner's lodgings on the preceding evening.

At the close of his evidence Mr. Lynx was complimented by the bench.

The attentive reader will of course be at no loss to conjecture Mr. Lynx's reason for making a delusive appointment with Joe Paget to meet him at



Brompton at half-past ten that morning, preliminary to a farther search.

It was done with the double object of keeping both Joe and Bridoon at home at the very time when he would be giving his evidence before the magistrates; and thus far his ruse succeeded.

The next witness was the railway clerk, and he, though unable positively to identify the prisoner, swore to the circumstances of the robbery and, to the best of his belief, that the prisoner was the pretended clerk.

Ephraim Ferrett, who had asked no questions of Lynx, cross-examined this witness astutely, and succeeded in extorting from him an admission that there was little or no resemblance between him (the accused) and the man who exchanged the parole.

Mr. Lynx requested to supplement his evidence. He should, on the next occasion, be prepared to prove that the notes and cash stolen from the parcels were dealt with by the prisoner Ferrett, and the notes were sold by him to one Israel Fagin, who had absconded.

This would be corroborated by one Joseph Paget, a railway guard who was not at present in custody, but was charged with perjury and personation, and with obtaining a situation of trust by means of false certificates and character. He proposed to produce him on a future occasion as a crown witness against the prisoner both in the present case and also in that of procuring a situation by a false character in the giving which, false character and forgery of several documents he should charge the prisoner of the bar as principal.

Mr. Ephraim Ferrett listened with a look of eager despair to this new disclosure and to the mention of the production of Joe Paget; he saw the full detection of his villainy, but he saw not, as on all previous occasions, some loophole for escape. He merely submitted—respectfully submitted—that none of this was evidence; and the magistrates, upon consideration, agreed with him upon the legal point, and told Mr. Lynx that, in the present position of the case, and the absence of Joseph Paget, he should not enter these statements on the depositions; which was a very unpleasant thing for Mr. Lynx to hear.

At the close the magistrates decided that there was a prima facie case for committal of the prisoner, and they reminded him until the following Thursday to complete the depositions, until which day Mr. Ephraim Ferrett was remitted to the House of Detention.

The following morning Mr. Serjeant Wilkins addressed the sitting judge at the Central Criminal Court, calling his lordship's attention to certain affidavits which he held in his hand in relation to the trial of Reginald Chesterton, now a prisoner in Her Majesty's jail of Newgate.

These affidavits, said the learned serjeant, disclosed an extraordinary state of facts, showing that the prisoner was the victim of a nefarious conspiracy to fix him with a felony of which he was entirely innocent. He should ask his lordship, after reading the affidavits, two things: 1, to postpone the trial until the next sessions of that court; and, 2, to make an order for the production of Reginald Chesterton, that he may be examined and bound over to give evidence on the trial of the principal criminal in this atrocious conspiracy, robbery and forgery.

One remarkable fact in support of his application was that it was made with the concurrence and approval of the counsel for the prosecution. He could assure his lordship that he was not in one iota oversteering his case, or overstepping the limits of counsel, when he pledged his honour as a gentleman, and his experience as an advocate, that the unfortunate man now lying in Newgate under this dreadful charge was as innocent as any indifferent auditor who now listened to him, or even the judges of the court whom he had the honour to address. Indeed, he feared not that upon the sworn evidence he should submit to Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Home Department he should succeed in obtaining his provisional release upon ample bail, to be entered into before a judge at chambers. He should now submit the affidavits and leave the matter in his lordship's hands.

The learned judge expressed his opinion that the affidavits fully supported the state of facts vouched for by his learned brother Wilkins. He would endorse them as examined by himself, and order the trial to stand over until next sessions.

#### CHAPTER LIV.

FERRET was the indignation and furious rage of Benjamin Bridoon when, after waiting with Joe Paget the whole forenoon, in expectation of the coming of Mr. Lynx, that gentleman did not put in an appearance.

"I'll tell you what it is, Joe," said he; "that 'tarnation seconded means to do you some dirty

trick. I shouldn't wonder if he had you grabbed, or some such rascally manoeuvre. He's sucked you dry, Joe, dry as a squeezed table sponge. But there are people as 'cute as he; he shan't find you here, nor nowhere else, till I please to produce you. Where do you think best to go to dodge him?"

"Where he and I went last night. There's cribs about there where he'd never find me."

"A good thought, Joe. We'll lose no time. You run down to Kensington Gore, the back way into the Park by the passage by Knightsbridge barracks, and wait about under the trees till I come up the drive towards the new Albert Gate. Nobody'll notice a chap loitering about there, there's no end of 'em, and I'll drive you through Park Lane and the squares, where we shall meet nobody, and so slick into Soho, over into Bloomsbury, down King's Road, across Gray's Inn Lane, and there you are in no time."

Joe approved every word of Mr. Bridoon's plan, but added:

"Thank'ee, sir, thank'ee; you are a friend. But I should hardly like to take you into such an uncomfortable crib."

"Oh, bless you, I'm not squeamish, Joe. I like to see life in London at both ends, in its downs as well as its ups. I've a great curiosity to see this very crib as Master Bowman groaned in after I'd squeezed his ribs that day at Meopham, the welshing warmint. How strange things do come round, Joe."

Joe was anxious to please his benefactor, so fell in with his whim.

"I don't believe," said he, "now I think it over, as Mr. Lynx ever meant to meet me this morning, nor I don't think he can mean to go to Chick Lane no more. He never tried the way of opening that door, which is very curious, I can tell you, but dowsed his lantern and left me to do it as well as I could so soon as ever he'd collared the book. No, no, Mr. Bridoon, he wanted to get rid of me for some purpose or other. That appointment was all a sell."

"We'll search that crib again to-night, Joe," said Bridoon, resolutely.

"That we will, sir," replied Joe; and he departed to keep the rendezvous.

Nothing of moment occurred until the light cart was turning into Soho, when a flying newsman with a few sheets of the "Evening Sun" under his arm dashed nearly under the nose of Mr. Bridoon's horse, yelling:

"Second edition! The great Bank robbery of ten thousand pounds! Hexamination of the prisoner at Bow Street this day! Second edition of the 'Sun'! Ya! ya! ya! Second edition!"

"What's that?" ejaculated Bridoon, as he pulled up his horse with a splutter on the stones that struck fire and sent the mud against the shop window at the corner.

He spoke to himself, for Joe lay snug under a sack on some straw in the bottom of the cart.

"Hi! you fellow, tip us a 'Sun.'"

A small boy stopped the itinerant news-vendor.

"A shilling!" said the fellow.

"You darned rogue!" replied Bridoon, possessing himself of one of the sheets which the man held rather incautiously within his reach. "There's sixpence, you vagabond."

And, giving the horse a slight flip, he was off, followed by the fading remonstrances of the extortionate flying stationer.

On they went for another half-mile, when Bridoon pulled rein at a public-house by the back of Gray's Inn, a little beyond Bedford Row, driving his cart a few yards down the mews.

In the parlour, by a bright gaslight, Benjamin spelt over the "hexamination" carefully, specially noting that part relating to the blotting-case and the suppression of the name of his protégé, Joe Paget.

Nor was his opinion of Mr. Lynx improved when, farther on, he came upon the supplementary bit about Joe, of which only a few lines were given, though its erasure from the depositions by the magistrates surprised and pleased him.

Benjamin Bridoon folded up the damp sheet with a sort of grunt.

"He's a bigger rogue than I took him for, and that's needless," said he.

Passing out by the bar, Mr. Bridoon ordered "a pint of dog's nose" and a "cup craftily spiced" with ginger, sweetened with sugar, and compounded with warm porter. This he took out with him into the dark mews.

"Joe!" said he, in a stage whisper.

A head appeared above the tailboard of the cart.

"Here, sup, lad; it will do ye good."

Joe did as he was desired.

"I've news for ye. Blacksheep Bowman's been examined before the Bow Street beaks to-day. I

don't know if he's committed or not. That precious blotting-book has been up and overhauled, and you're out of the swim, as I told you. But we'll talk about that by-and-bye. Finish your drink, man. I've had my dose inside."

The empty pewter was returned; Joe dived again into his straw, and hauled the sack over his head and shoulders, and the cart shortly after drew up again, this time in the stable-yard of the old "Saracen's Head" at the top of Snow Hill.

There Joe made his exit from his hiding-place, and Mr. Bridoon, having given his nag in charge to the single stable-help of the once great coaching establishment, rejoined his companion in Cow Lane, whence a dark, crooked and muddy passage led them to the oft-visited Chick Lane.

A couple of penny mutton-fats were now purchased at the corner chandler's shop, together with a box of Hynam's, and a penny "sconce." This last utensil consisted of a nozzle of tin, soft-soldered into a corrugated circle of the same material, forming an extemporaneous candlestick much affected in days of old by poor street vendors, barrow-women and hucksters and by children and humble housekeepers on "illumination nights."

Thus provided, they mounted the dark staircase, Joe leading the way. The door was manipulated and the light struck.

"Well, Joe," said Bridoon, after a leisurely survey, for which purpose he fitted his "long six" into the neck of a ginger-beer bottle, while Joe fixed the tin "sconce" aforesaid in a split in the edge of the mantelpiece; "I'm blessed if this isn't a lovely crib to lie up in! But, queer as it is, Joe, I rather guess that the clever Mr. Ephraim 'ud prefer it to his present lodgings, although the country do furnish 'em to him free gratis. So this was the den where he nursed his bruised old carcass after that jolly roasting the mob give him that fine afternoon. How the beggar did holler sure-ly; I was half afraid he was done for when they flung him into the ditch, and expected to see a coroner's inquest in the papers, so I held my tongue and never even whispered about it, till you told me that the welsher was that vagabond, Ephraim Ferrett. But, Joe, didn't you say that we were to have a search for—"

"That's what I'm at now," responded Joe, who, after shading his eyes with one hand, and holding the candle above his head with the other, had mounted on the stout post and headboard of the rude stump-bedstead.

"Look here," said he, pointing to a small crack at the lower edge of a long, white-washed board; "hand me up the screwdriver I've just laid on the table, and hold this candle."

Bridoon handed up the implement, and Joe, inserting its edge under the board, prised it up, when it dropped outwards into his hand. Catching it by the end, he transferred it to Bridoon.

"Ay, ay, sir, here's his wardrobe; and, as the showman says, 'all the new dresses, costumes, and properties.' Old Eph had a sight of togs at one time and another, to be sure. But there, he always had the handling of the money, and the dealing of it out, so that let who might go short he didn't. That's not it," continued Joe, throwing down a heavy pilot-cloth greatcoat; "nor that," throwing down a pair of long cord overalls.

"Oh! here's a rummy go!—a parson's shovel-hat, and a straight wig of oily black hair, and a pair of white bands and black gloves, all in a hat-box; and here's also a wide-awake tile, crown downwards, in the bottom, with a set of No. 6 side-curls and a 'knocker-o'-Newgate crop' complete sowed round the lining of it! Eph used to call this his 'Bill Sykes,' and wear it to down-the-river fights, when he had contrived a little 'crop,' and had squared the matter for 'Mister Barney' to drop in at the nick o' time and stop the proceedings if needful.

"Well, they do say as there's nothink in books nor plays as comes up to real honesty, and I begin to think it is so, seeing as Eph's in Newgate with all his cleverness and stupid Joe Paget's a-overhauling his property, and out of it—at any rate as yet. Just take this, master; thank'ee."

Joe proceeded with his search in this curiously furnished clothes-press.

"Hooray! hooray! I" he cried, in a hoarse whisper. "Hooray!—I've come on 'em at last! Here they are!"

Thus saying, he held out admiringly as well-clobered a 'petter-ash-new' black dress-coat, of a square, middle-aged cut, as ever adorned a doorpost in Holywell Street, in the days when the children of Israel bought and sold in that dingy thoroughfare, ere secondhand booksellers and news-vendors had driven them forth, and dubbed their little Goshen "Paternoster Row West."

Mr. Bridoon looked at the garment with great interest.

"This is the very identical coat," continued Joe, "as that most respectable City clerk wore the day as he called for them jewels at London Bridge. And here's the white pudding-choker, and the kerosé breeches, and the black waist with the frilled dickey, and all!"

Mr. Bridoon received the precious articles and laid them carefully on the table.

"Any more?"

"I should think so. Here's a pair o' buckle shoes, regular square-toes, and a pair of walking gaiters, and here's two more hat-boxes; contents unknown, as the carriers says; but we'll see into them presently. There, I think that's about the lot. Stay, here's a railway book of 'regulations and instructions' to guards and drivers and signalmen and such like, and no end o' Raff's Turf Guides and McCall's Liverpool monthlies, which I well know the looks on. That's all, I believe. So I'll just come down, sir, and we'll take stock."

So saying, Joe jumped nimbly from his elevated standing, and the two searchers continued their investigations on the table.

The first batch presented nothing remarkable in its contents, the second was filled with miscellaneous papers.

"We may find something among these, Joe, by-and-bye," said Bridoon; "what we already have will be quite enough to turn the tables on Mr. Lynx, and no mistake. Of course you will not stay here?"

"Certainly not," replied Joe. "I never meant. Only I was sure there was more to be found, and now I'm glad that I didn't tell Mr. Lynx any more, as I should have been fast enough to do if he hadn't been in such a precious hurry when he got hold of that bit o' a book. I shall turn into a lodging-house here on Saffron Hill and do the grand in a separate bedroom for a tanner, instead of a twopenny rope, or a fourpenny dorse in the general room—ha! ha! there's queer ways o' 'steopin,' as well as breakfastin', drinkin' and suppin' in London, Mr. Bridoon, as any man'll soon learn as hasn't more nor a shilling to do the twenty-four hours on and board and lodge himself. But may I be so bold as to ask what you may be going to do with them things we've found?" asked Joe Paget as he observed Mr. Bridoon, with a solemn and thoughtful air, carefully tying up Ephraim's clerical habitments in a yellow bandanna.

"Well, I'll tell you what I mean to do, Joe. It's not more than eight o'clock, and the nag I toiled down here isn't troubled with the shivers; so I was thinking, as Mr. Lynx has let go the tow-ropes with you, that we'll hark on to a better craft, and see what we can do for ourselves on our own bottom. It won't take me more than twenty-five minutes to cover the ground from here to Eaton Square."

"I see," said Joe, "capital! I took a fancy to that Squire Frankland directly I seed him, he's a first-rate gentleman whoever the next may be. He'll stand none o' Mr. Lynx's nonsense, not he. He'll do a poor fellow justice, all the more because he is poor. Thank'ee, Mr. Bridoon; I know what you are going to do. You'll show the squire those things and Mr. Chesterton's father too; for that matter, and you'll tell 'em the rights about the blotting-paper and the book, and old Eph's lodgings, and Mr. Lynx's dirty trick on me, and—"

"Of course I will, Joe. I've got it all at the tip of my tongue, as if I'd learnt it out of a book. The sneaking, man-eating spy; to go and try to pump a poor fellow all he knows and then sell the information as his own. Never mind, Joe, I'll spoil his character with those he don't expect I'll ever get speech of. But we're wasting time, and the night's running on."

"Stop a few seconds," said Joe, "and I'll make up a little parcel too. First of all I'll put on this pilot coat; it's a rare stout 'un and good as new. This pair of overalls, too, is too good to leave here; and it's only fair, as old Eph has chiselled me so many times I should borrow a few of his cast-off clothes, seeing also as he's not very likely to get a chance of wearing 'em out during the present season, at least."

Joe duly invested his person in the articles named.

"Now," said he, "I'll put back the rest and make things straight a little."

Mr. Bridoon waited with great good humour, and expressed his entire approval of Joe's proceedings.

The two candles were extinguished, and Joe took charge of them.

They descended the stairs and entered a low public-house a few doors off.

Here Bridoon gave Joe a few shillings, made an appointment for ten next morning in Hyde Park, at the place where he had taken him up that evening, and, returning to the "Saracen's Head," rehearsed

his nag and drove straight for Squire Frankland's mansion in Eaton Square.

Arrived there, Mr. Bridoon was immediately ushered into the presence of the squire, Ralph Chesterton, Captain Sherlock and the ladies, Mrs. Hartwell laughingly declining to retire, and encouraging Cecilia in the like good-humoured defiance.

The "plain, unvarnished tale" was "roundly delivered" by the downright Ben Bridoon.

The story of the blotting-book and of Joe's witnessing the sale of the notes to Fagin, and the second search of Ephraim's lodgings was told. But the culminating point was the display of the clerk's disguise.

The squire, despite the gravity of the situation, was convulsed with laughter, and the infection spread to his merry sister, while a sad smile stole over the countenance of Ralph and his daughter.

We need not say how gladly his information was received, how heartily the mean duplicity of Mr. Lynx was condemned, how thoroughly despicable that personage was declared to be by Squire Frankland, Ralph Chesterton and Captain Sherlock how Joe Paget's misery, helplessness and dangerous predicament were sympathized with, and, lastly, how the honest squire promised his protection and assistance in rescuing and protecting him.

Ralph Chesterton pointed out that an application to secure him as a witness for the crown, and the framing of an affidavit, to be drawn by Sergeant Wilkins, might on the very next morning effect that object; and, further, Mr. Chesterton there and then sat down and penned a short note, which, he said, would reach the learned counsel's chambers before nine and another to the court at Westminster, to be delivered about ten, should the post-letter miss him.

Bridoon's appointment with Joe was thereupon confirmed and held good.

"Mr. Bridoon," said the squire, "your conduct throughout this matter; as regards this unfortunate young man, has earned our lasting gratitude. I feel sorry I have been so deceived in Mr. Lynx, but I do not know how I could be so simple as to expect candour or generosity from a man trained in such a profession. In this instance I am sorry to say, though I daresay the fellow does himself not view it so, I have not found common honesty. He has, however, seen the last of my money. Tell your young man, Mr. Bridoon, not to fear. I will deal with his false friend and foil him, if he means any foul play. At half past ten, then, we may expect you?"

Mr. Bridoon drove home to Brompton a proud and happy man.

How he fulfilled his engagements and what came of his disclosures must be told in another chapter.

(To be continued.)

## SECRET POWER.

### CHAPTER IX.

A MOMENT Clarice gazed upon the artist in painful wonder, then slowly rising and passing her hands across her temples, while her eyes were still fixed upon him with that glance so wild and piteous, she vehemently whispered:

"Why are you here? You are in danger—you must not stay! Go—leave me!"

Although his heart was heavy with disappointment at not finding him whom he was in search of, and his mind was tormented by doubt and fear, the artist could not help feeling a deep interest in the pale, sorrowful being before him. An instant longer he regarded her in mingled sympathy and compassion, and then said:

"I expected not to see you. I know not who you are, but enough it is that you are a woman and in grief. I cannot, will not, leave you here to suffer, but I will save you."

Her eyes dilated, her face grew bright, and she started forward as if in ecstasy; then a revulsion of feeling possessed her, her eyes again assumed that dull glare, her hands involuntarily came together, and, slowly moving backward, she bitterly ejaculated:

"No, no, it cannot be! I have dreamed, hoped, prayed for it; but it is a mockery, a cruel mockery! You ask to torture me; you are like all the rest! Go—go, and leave me to despair—to death!"

"She is a good actress," whispered Luis.

The artist noticed not his words, but softly advanced, and, extending his hand with a gentle, reassuring gesture, kindly responded:

"Not so; you wrong me. Think you that I could be base enough to deceive a woman? Heartless enough to add to her sorrow? No, no! Heaven forbid that I should be thus guilty!"

"They all talk so," she cried, while her features

contracted; "they hide cruelly beneath compassion hate beneath love, and then surround me with new misery—new oppression. I can believe no one—truth is dead. But, stop, tell me why you are here—here?"

And she shuddered.

"I came here with the hope of finding a dear friend," he rejoined, gazing steadily into her face, "but have not been successful. Now I wish you to tell me who you mean by 'they.'"

"Hush!"—she started back and raised her hand warningly—"they can hear; they are always near. I live in dread, in torture. But why do I talk?—you know it all. You laugh silently at my woe; it pleases you to know that soon I shall be mad—that I shall never see him."

"Who?" The word left the lips of the artist unconsciously.

Her features relaxed and became calm almost to vacancy, and she slowly moved backward, mechanically waving her hand deprecatorily. At length she paused, regarded him in mingled wonder and sadness and then, advancing, pleadingly said:

"What did I say that makes you look at me so?"

Earrest pity wreathed the face of the artist as he gazed down upon that lovely being, whose sorrow had at last attacked the citadel of reason.

Again, as her eyes, so large and lustrous, opened wider, he started convulsively, and, to prove the truth of the supposition which had entered his mind so suddenly, he quickly answered:

"You spoke of Vane?"

Her body became rigid, her lips were compressed, and from her throat came the single word, in still tones:

"Well?"

Matthew knew that his conjecture was correct, but, repressing the agitating thought which the knowledge engendered, he continued his ruse by saying at a venture:

"He has not been seen since."

A low, agonized moan left the girl's pallid lips, and she would have fallen to the floor had not he caught her to his arms.

An instant he gazed upon her blanched face, and then, placing her gently in a chair, turned to Signor Luis and requested him to procure water.

The detective bowed assent and hurried away. Presently he returned with a cup filled with the sparkling liquid, pressed it to the artist, and stood silently by and watched him in his efforts to reanimate the maiden.

"How strange it is, Signor Luis," mused the artist, as he chafed the delicate wrist of the girl, "that in hunting for Vane we should find Clarice, and in this state, if I dread it! Poor child! she must have suffered keenly."

"You have a very warm heart, signor," observed the detective, indifferently, "so warm that it is controlled by appearance. That girl is playing a part."

"And you, Signor Luis," replied the artist, with just a touch of indignation, "are very sagacious and penetrative, but in this you are incorrect."

The officer shrugged his shoulders, but did not speak, and Matthew, with renewed zeal, resumed his task of restoring to animation the senseless Clarice.

As he looked upon her he wondered not that Vane had loved her, for now her face was calm as in sleep, and all its natural gentleness and beauty, undisturbed by the pangs of anguish, was plainly perceptible.

He was very thankful that he had found her, but to dim his joy at this came the thoughts of the mystery attending the absence of the surgeon, the fears, conjectures, and grim doubts that thronged his mind, and the harrowing suspense that rested over all like a mantle of gloom.

At length, as the artist became somewhat apprehensive at the continued insensibility of his fair patient, her large eyes slowly opened and were raised to his in dreamy inquiry.

"Are you better?" he asked, kindly, with a faint smile.

For a full minute those shining brown orbs scanned his face with lights varying from wonder to melancholy; then she moved her hand slowly over her brow, and quivered, in a whisper:

"Who are you, and where have I been?"

"I am your friend," he slowly responded, in a soothing voice; "you have been asleep."

"Strange, very strange!" she murmured, in a sadly incredulous way; "I have no friends, and asleep!—oh, it is very rarely that I am thus blessed. I cannot sleep, for all the time these dreadful things are before my mind, and sometimes I fear that I shall be insane—isn't it awful to be a madman? I have dreamed that I was, but you don't think I am, do you?"



The artist turned his head away, for that low, plaintive voice had struck the tenderest chord of his warm, impulsive heart, and those mellow eyes bent upon him so pleadingly had aroused all the sympathy of his generous nature. An instant he hesitated that he might gain control of his voice, and then responded:

"No, no; you are weary and depressed, but a little quiet will restore you. You will leave this place with me, will you not?"

Her hands involuntarily came together, as if with fond hope, her lips parted, her eyes emitted a soft, happy light, then they drooped, her face became sad again, and she despondingly said:

"They will not let me. Oh, if I only could; but they won't let me!"

An instant she was silent, then partially rising and placing her hand upon his arm, while her eyes dilated and swept the room with quick glance, she added, nervously:

"I believe I should be well again if I could get away. I have been here so long. You know what freedom is, don't you? Isn't it sweet? I have thought of this much. Now if you will be very careful and walk very slow, I will go with you—but stop, you won't take me to a worse prison, will you?"

"No, you shall be cared for tenderly," said the artist, gravely, for as he saw how dependent she was he seemed to grow older, to feel more like a protector, and consequently addressed her as he would a younger sister.

At that moment the sculptor, followed by Pierre, appeared in the entry. As the latter beheld the maiden he halted suddenly, threw out his hand with a gesture of astonishment, and was about to speak when the artist raised his finger with a motion to command silence, and Mr. Lander at once comprehending the state of affairs, turned, and signalling Pierre to follow him, walked away.

Clarice shrank from the side of the artist, and, glancing from one to the other with apprehensive distrust, said, in tones of reproof:

"Who are these men that come and go at your bidding? Oh, do not deceive me, for I can bear but little more. I have been betrayed into new misery so often, and now when I have a little hope it would be wicked to crush it all. You won't—oh, promise me honestly—let me hear the truth, real truth, once more—that you won't carry me to another dark place?"

Matthew turned his mild eyes upon her, and impressively rejoined:

"I give you my word of honour, my pledge before Heaven which we both love, and which in mercy has sent me hither and enabled me to rescue you, that you shall be taken where kindness shall meet you, where you will be safe."

Her face became radiant, the listless, blank look which the artist had feared foreboded permanent insanity passed away, and in its place came an expression of animated gladness, and she gratefully said:

"I believe you, I thank you, but let us come now; don't wait."

He smiled his reply, and drawing her arm through his, moved rapidly through the entry. Anon, as they walked, her expression changed to one of fear, and she glanced suspiciously around, at the same time begging him to hurry. He endeavoured to soothe her, but her perturbation increased, and at every second step she started spasmodically, as if fearful lest an enemy should spring out upon them from the rooms at either side.

As they reached the first floor Signor Luis, who had descended some minutes previously, appeared with the tall woman in custody. As Clarice saw her she uttered a cry of affright, covered her eyes with her hand, that the repulsive object might be shut from view, and clung more firmly to the arm of the artist. He inferred from this that the coarse female had been her keeper, but knowing it would only disturb her to refer to it, and desiring to allay her excitement as much as possible, he spoke cheering, tender words, and sought to impress it upon her mind that she was safe. This, however, was a difficult task; for the effects of constant dread, continued grief and agitation, cannot be at once mitigated, much less relieved.

Presently they reached the street, where two carriages, which had been procured by an officer, were in waiting. As the sculptor saw the artist he advanced and was about to speak, when, seeing that the maiden shrank away as if desirous of avoiding either an introduction or conversation, he turned aside and opened the door of the foremost carriage for them to enter.

Matthew bowed his thanks, smiled with sad significance, and conducted Clarice to the vehicle; as she placed her foot upon the step the driver spoke. The sound of his voice for an instant held her still,

then, tearing away from the grasp of the artist, and running back to the house, she tremulously ejaculated:

"No, no, not with him! Let me die here in despair, but don't torture me with false hope!"

"What means this?" exclaimed the artist, in astonishment. "Do you know him?"

She drew nearer to the wall, threw out one hand in blended terror and supplication, and answered, in accents short and husky:

"Yes—yes! I knew that some of them were near. I will trust you once more. Come, come, let us run away from here; but where—oh, tell me where?"

And she trembled violently, while over her face like a shadow again came that black, staring look, so sad, so frightful.

Gently, with delicacy, and that she might have support, the artist placed his arm around her waist, and with mild sincerity and encouraging firmness said:

"Remember, I have given you my pledge. Be calm, and fear not. No harm shall come to you. I will protect you with my life!"

He paused and added:

"For his sake, be my friend!"

With an imprecation the driver swung his whip in the air and brought it down with stinging force upon the ears of the horses, who, maddened by the cruel lash, rose upon their hind feet, and were about to bound forward, when, at the risk of his life, the sculptor caught the near one by the bridle and held it back with all his force.

"No, treachery! Here, Pierre, take her—quick!"

And with these words, uttered in excited tones, Signor Luis dashed forward, drew his pistol, aimed it at the driver's heart, and sternly commanded:

"Down—come down, or you are a dead man!"

Enraged at his defeat, the driver moved backward and forward on the box, giving utterance to dreadful oaths, and gnashing his teeth furiously.

An instant more and his resolve was taken, and, springing from his seat, he fell upon Signor Luis and bore him to the ground.

Nobly the detective struggled, but the knee of the brawny ruffian was upon his breast, his hand upon his throat, and strength and breath were thus almost suspended.

Hardly daring to disobey orders, yet anxious for the safety of his superior, Pierre hesitated a moment to watch the progress of the encounter, then, seeing that Signor Luis was in danger of losing his life, he rushed forward, struck the aggressor a terrible blow, which rendered him senseless, and then quickly affixed a pair of handcuffs to his wrists.

The short but desperate contest had exhausted Signor Luis, and for a moment he lay still to regain natural respiration; then, arising, he bent over the prostrate villain and regarded him searchingly. Anon his eye lighted, an expression of gratification flitted over his features, and, tearing the false whiskers from the face of the captive, he triumphantly exclaimed:

"You thought to capture us, did you? Your tongue spoiled your pretty game, and gave me a held upon you which I shall not let go in a hurry. You have worked very well, disguised yourself very cleverly, and escaped us too long already."

"What! is it the seer?" interrupted the artist, excitedly.

"The seer!" laughed the detective, "the idea is ridiculous. It is the fellow who has driven between the two houses for several nights past. As near as I can determine, his game was to get us into the carriage and carry us among our enemies; so that we could all be taken. It was a bold plan; but, thanks to the young lady, it has failed. I have a clue now, Signor Hart, which will help me to uproot this affair."

"Heaven grant success. Poor Vane!" murmured the artist, almost unconsciously.

"What—what did you say?" and the maiden's fingers closed convulsively over his wrist, and her breath came in short, quick gasps, while her eyes dilated and emitted a light of eager application so intense that it seemed like frenzy.

Matthew could not speak for a moment. Vane gone, perhaps dead, and she whom he loved so passionately, so oppressed by suffering that she was rational only at intervals—it was dreadful!

He prayed for both, he struggled with his emotions, and then said, in a steady voice as he could command:

"Nothing, nothing; give no heed to my words, they were but the expression of a passing thought. Let nothing disturb you, but lean upon me and be as calm as possible."

Her hand fell from his arm, her face underwent many changes, from despair to simple wonder, from impulsive hope to indifferent incredulity, and with a little sigh, which denoted principally weariness,

she dropped her eyes and relapsed into a listless silence.

Signor Luis now called one of his men to aid him, and proceeded to bind the ankles of the fallen miscreant, and then with proper caution commanded:

"Roberto, place this fellow in the second carriage, and do you ride upon the box with the driver to prevent any more treachery. We cannot be too careful, we know not where we may meet the cunning agents of the Secret Power."

Then turning to Pierre he continued:

"Bring the female prisoner forward, she must be bound also."

With his chin resting upon his chest, and his hands working nervously together, Pierre advanced, and, passing before his superior, regretfully said:

"I am very sorry, signor, but the woman escaped while I was assisting you."

"Escaped! gone!" ejaculated Signor Luis, in consternation, "what carelessness! But she cannot be far off, she must be concealed near here. Search everywhere, go—"

"Excuse me, signor," interposed Pierre, "but I have examined every available place, she is nowhere to be found."

The brows of the detective contracted, and he bit his lip with vexation. He could not reproach Pierre, for that would be ingratitude, and yet he was angry as well as grieved at the loss of the tall female, for in connection with her he had entertained many hopes, the most prominent of which was that he would force from her confession which would enable him to arrest her companions and restore the surgeon at once. This was now destroyed, and repining would only make the fact more bitter. Accordingly he dispelled his unpleasant feelings and composedly said:

"Since this has occurred we have no cause to detain us longer here. Pierre, you will act as driver for the first carriage. I shall go in the second. Signor, we are ready."

"Come," said Matthew, gently, and in a tone of forced joy, "you are going away from this house for ever."

Clarice raised her glowing eyes and gazed steadfastly into his face for a full minute; then, with a sad, sweet smile, she softly repeated:

"For ever, for ever! Oh, I think I see light beyond. I know you are not deceiving me. I am very glad to go."

Carefully the artist assisted her into the carriage, and seated himself on the front seat at the side of the sculptor. None of the three spoke, the only sound was made by the wheels as they rattled over the stony street.

## CHAPTER X.

The motion of the vehicle, the brief rest which had been vouchsafed her, the delicacy and kindness she had received, had a salutary effect upon Clarice.

It seemed that a mist was floating away from her brain, that the heaviness which had rested upon it was being gradually banished, that the weakness which had acted as a withering blight upon her physical system was being removed, and that strength was assuming its place. Anon these feelings became more vigorous and extended, her mind grew buoyant, and like a flash of lightning came the full realization of her situation of a short time before, which caused her to look back upon it with terror, as a reef upon which her life might have been wrecked.

She was right. She knew not to its full extent the peril of her position, she knew not that she had entered the first degree of insanity—that, had not a counter effect been produced at the exact time it was, she would have been a maniac. Her suffering, long continued and debilitating, was culminating in lunacy her nature, so long oppressed, was undergoing a change at the moment when Matthew Hart pronounced the name of his friend in the house.

That caused syncope, enabled reason to rest in insensibility and recover its balance, and when she awoke the bewilderment engendered by this had prevented thought from conflicting, and had given her brain time to regain its equilibrium in quiet. This, aided by gentleness, gave her a sense of security, which helped the reaction to develop itself more rapidly than could have been expected, and at last allowed the temporary haze to pass off. Had she not been blessed with a vigorous constitution and great power of will—which she was unconsciously exerting all the time—she could not have survived the crisis with a sound mind.

Lighter grew that rejuvenating feeling, until the glow of health, mental and physical, returned to her being. Her first thought was one of thankfulness to Heaven for her safety—then a moment she allowed herself to rest; it was so sweet to feel the



[CLARICE FOUND.]

mind once more performing its natural functions, so tranquillizing to know that she was in security.

Soon, however, she began to reflect upon her present position. She could remember but little, very little of what had been said and what had transpired during the hours preceding, but enough to acquaint her with the fact that she was with friends of Vane Vincent. That name brought back events which had been veiled from her mind for a very long time, she thought, but in reality only a few days. She saw him again before her mental vision as he fell through the trap in the upper floor of the house of the dark side, and the picture caused her to shudder. Had he been seen since, her heart questioned. She could not recollect that the artist had told her that he had not; she could only reason upon it, and conclude, from the fact of his absence, that he had not.

This gave her sorrow, but in the midst of it she experienced a delicious quieting influence, a trust which mitigated its severity and caused her to hope. Anon, her cogitation grasped another subject, and one that produced perplexity, doubt, apprehension and sadness, and blended them so as to engender agitating and conflicting thought. In this there was no hope to comfort her, but she bravely resolved to meet it without fear, to meditate as little as possible, and to let her gratitude for her deliverance from confinement and the restoration of her reason overbalance all trouble.

As she came to this wise, philosophical and touching—for it is so, when we think of her trials—determination, the carriage stopped before the house of the sculptor, and the artist assisted her to alight. Silently the three entered the house and proceeded to the parlour, which was brilliantly illumined. Matthew, who had been walking by her side with his eyes downcast, now looked up and uttered an involuntary exclamation of surprise, as he saw the animation, the glow, the brightness of her face, and then, conscious that he had been rude, he apologetically said:

"I beg your pardon, but—but you looked so different—"

He paused, confused and abashed by the shining beauty and intelligence of those brown eyes.

She smiled reassuringly, and with a deprecatory gesture replied:

"Why should you hesitate? I have to thank you for my rescue, and although I was hardly conscious of it until a few moments ago yet I hope I am not the less grateful in consequence. You know not my name—it is Clarice Lee."

"I am thankful as well as happy to know that the

unpleasant effect of your trial has passed away. I am Matthew Hart, and now let me introduce my friend, Mr. Wallace Lander."

Mr. Lander advanced, bowed courteously, and earnestly said:

"It gives me pleasure to welcome you to my house, second only to that of the knowledge of your safety. We are strangers, yet I have known you for some time—but, pardon me, it must be annoying to meet none of your own sex. I am sorry that I cannot present an equal, yet my housekeeper is a worthy woman, and will at least supply the deficiency," and moving across the room he rang the bell.

Presently the door opened, and a genial-faced, buxom woman of middle age entered, bearing a tray of delicacies. After setting the tray upon a table which she drew up under the chandelier, she turned around, courtesied, and was then introduced to Clarice.

"You certainly need some refreshment, Miss Lee," said Matthew, who, feeling himself more acquainted with Clarice, assumed the part of host; "permit me to help you—will you take wine or coffee?"

"Excuse me if I interfere," remarked Mrs. Lennox, "but there is some good strong tea there, which I made expressly, thinking that Mr. Vincent would come."

Clarice tried to render herself indifferent, but so sudden and unexpected was the shock that the spoon fell from her hand, rattled against the marble slab, and dropped to the floor, while she was painfully conscious of flushing crimson.

The sculptor frowned, and pretended to examine a book, that her embarrassment might not be increased.

The artist for the instant was nonplussed; then he assisted her in overcoming the annoyance by taking not the least notice of the incident, and helping her to some choice viands.

No more was said until Clarice had finished her repast, and Mrs. Lennox had wheeled the table away and seated herself at the other extreme of the room; then the artist drew a chair towards Clarice, and somewhat indifferently observed:

"Miss Lee, are you strong enough to converse a short time?"

Her eyes dropped, she hesitated, and then evasively answered:

"I should be ungrateful were I to refuse so slight a favour."

He noticed the reluctance with which she spoke, and, attributing it to maidenly diffidence arising from the peculiar circumstances under which they had,

become acquainted, he gently and reassuringly continued:

"You naturally feel ill at ease here, but I hope the fact that all are your friends will help you to become perfectly contented. The subject on which I am about to speak must necessarily be a painful one to you, and yet I have such an interest in it that I cannot remain silent."

She bowed, and he resumed.

"You, I imagine, have been grievously wronged, in fact, I know that you have endured much grief, for when I first saw you the effects of it were only too apparent. In consequence of your sorrow another—a dear, very dear friend of mine, has lost his liberty, perhaps his life."

As these words smote the ear of the lovely Clarice it seemed to her that her heart trembled and dropped down, and yet they were but a confirmation of the conjecture which had previously arisen in her own mind.

But what gave them their poignancy was the circumstances which none but she had knowledge of.

She struggled with herself a moment, and then her features became rigid, her smile emitted a dull, steady light, and she merely said:

"Well?"

The cold tone in which that word was uttered, the hard indifference which sat like marble upon the speaker's face, caused the remark of the detective to fly through the artist's mind, and gazing with stern doubt upon her he hastily demanded:

"Do you mean by this that you know not to what I refer?"

The maiden's hands, which were clasped over each other, quivered, and the finger-nails pressed their palms, but her face changed not its stony look, and in low, measured tones she replied:

"I deny nothing—I affirm nothing."

The artist started to his feet, walked backward and forward a moment with heavy, impatient tread, and then pausing before her, and directing his dark eyes searchingly upon her, exclaimed:

"Why do you elude my questions? Why are you so immovable? Surely, suffering innocence would not thus clothe itself in questionable silence. I ask you again, have you seen—do you know aught of Vane Vincent?"

In his ardour, in his haste, Matthew had uttered words which sent a shivering pang to Clarice's heart, and for the moment almost stupified her with anguish, but by an effort her faltering speech was again restored.

(To be continued.)





[ENGAGING A TUTOR.]

## THE BARONET'S SON;

OR,  
LOVE AND HATE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Winifred Wynne," "One Sparkle of Gold," etc., etc.

## CHAPTER V.

There is in souls a sympathy with sounds,  
And as the mind is pitched the ear is pleased  
With melting airs, or martial—brisk, or grave,  
Some chord in unison with what we hear  
Is touched within us, and the heart replies;  
A kindred melody the scene renews,  
And with it all its pleasures and its pains.

OSCAR VANDELKUR had made his way to Penzance, and now came the final crisis as to his future movements.

By the force of habit he took up his abode at the "Queen's," though it might better have suited his fallen fortunes had he chosen some humbler domicile.

Of course, as the son of Sir Lewis Vandeleur and the protégé of Lord Delmore, he was accommodated with the best room vacant and received the most respectful attention both from the host and the waiters of the hotel, till, in the bitterness of his heart, he smiled to think how changed the whole aspect of matters would be if the real state of his affairs were known to the civil and anxiously solicitous hirelings.

"The London papers have just come in, sir," said the waiter, as he removed the breakfast things the second morning after the young man's arrival. "Perhaps you would like to see them."

And he laid the one of them on the table as he spoke.

Oscar immediately availed himself of the offer, but for a very different purpose from that which the waiter would have imagined.

It was not the daily gossip that he perused, nor yet the political and fashionable intelligence, but the sheet that is least fascinating to some and the turning-point of the destinies of others—viz. the supplement and advertisement sheet of the massive journal.

Oscar ran his eyes eagerly over the long list of advertisements till he came to one that more especially attracted his attention.

It ran thus:

"Wanted—a gentleman of ability and birth and breeding to superintend the studies of a youth of fourteen, who is destined for a profession that will require a severe examination. Any one who fully answers the description thus given, and who may meet the views of the advertiser, will have a liberal salary and a most attractive and eligible home, and probably may be introduced to advantageous prospects when the immediate purpose of the advertiser may be fulfilled. Address, C. B., post-office, Westbourne Terrace."

The offer appeared certainly a tempting one, and Oscar Vandeleur thought over it with a deep and earnest deliberation.

He had no fancy for condemning himself to either insult or an ignominious expulsion from the family of Mr. O. B., and he began to take himself to task to ascertain the real state of his abilities in the matter.

Certainly he had received an excellent training, that ought to have fitted him for the post that was thus opened to him so opportunely, but then came the mortifying idea that he might perhaps receive a rejection or, what was still worse, he might lose this position after he had once obtained it. But, then, necessity impelled him to make the attempt.

There was no other prospect that he could at present imagine for him to get on in the world, albeit he had so bravely and so resolutely dared his fate.

He hastily called for pen and paper and dashed off a few lines to "C. B.," informing him that he would be in London at such a date, and would then call on him and state his wishes and qualifications, then he called for his bill and the railway guide and began to make final arrangements for his journey to the metropolis.

There was much to think of and to foresee before he could even hope to obtain such an appointment as the one in question.

He was scarcely so unversed in the world as not to comprehend that there must be many preliminary matters to be settled ere he could even hope for the consent of his correspondent to the acceptance of an unknown man, without references, or even introductions to him, and the rest of the day was employed by the young man in considering the mode of action in this novel matter, and ere the hour for his departure arrived he had in a measure organized his plans of action, and the long night journey was fully occupied by the speculations for the future and anxious misgivings as to the result of the interview that was in all probability to decide his fate.

"Is Mr. Bradley at home?" asked Oscar Vandeleur, as he stood on the steps of the large and handsome mansion which appeared to be the residence of the "C. B.," from whom he had already received a gracious answer and an invitation to call at his residence in the morning of the following day.

The footman was unusually civil, considering that he was but a young and not well versed domestic in the aspect of the fashionable world, and in distinguishing a gentleman when he saw him, even though not surrounded by any of the attributes of wealth.

"Yes, sir; if you will give me your name I will take it in, or your card," he replied. "And I am quite sure that he will see you, sir, if you are the gentleman whom he said he expected to call on him this morning, by appointment."

Of course the applicant for admission signified that such was the case, and in a few minutes he was ushered into a library, whose gorgeous lining of handsomely bound books bespoke rather wealth than taste, it might be, in the owner of the collection.

The apartment was vacant at the time when the heir of Vandeleur entered, and he had, therefore, ample opportunity of surveying the appointments of the furniture and contents, and comparing them with the rooms devoted to similar purposes in the Hall and the Castle, where his life had hitherto been passed.

Certainly the air of newness over the whole entourage did not improve its appearance in his critical eye, nor tend to raise his estimate of the person whom he was shortly to meet as the judge and arbiter of his present course.

He was not long left in suspense.

In a few minutes the door opened, and an individual entered, whom he had not any difficulty in recognizing as the probable inmate of the house.

Mr. Bradley was "sharp" in his whole aspect and get-up. There was no other phrase for it.

His features—especially his eyes—were sharply defined, his figure was rather under the middle size, and very defined in its lines and his dress, which was close and tight in its form and its fit.

And his address was about as sharp and as abrupt as his whole appearance betokened.

"Good morning, Mr.—a—Vandeleur, yes, that is your name, as I believe—very good, yes, so far, quite satisfactory," he went on, in the most glib tone, as if all was arranged in his mind before he entered the room. "Let me see, you are the son of—of—" and he stopped either from lack of breath or information, or it might be to allow his visitor to open his lips and

give some idea of his voice as well as his personal appearance.

"Of Sir Lewis Vandeleur, Mr. Bradley," put in the young man, calmly.

He had already weighed the chances of his telling the truth, or the reverse, and he considered that he owed really nothing to his father, who had behaved to him with such unfounded harshness, and that he should feel no compunction at casting on him the consequences of the name being thus degraded and compromised.

"Ah, yes, indeed, so I imagined; let me see—him is, I think, a Cornish baronet, is he not?" returned Mr. Bradley, interrogatively.

The gentleman assented.

"Yes, I looked into that before I answered your letter," continued the owner of the mansion. "That is a thing about which I am more particular than anything else—I mean good birth; and, I may add that, if I am not mistaken, you are the only son, and, therefore, the heir to the estate. Am I not correct, Mr. Vandeleur?"

Oscar haughtily assented.

For the first time he fully realized what a wide distinction existed between his interlocutor, in his plebeian commonness of manner and of tone, and those of his own class and birth.

"Well, I don't want to pry, but still I feel some rather strange, I must say, that a young gentleman of such birth and such expectations should be reduced to the dependent position which you seem anxious to assume. It is scarcely probable that it can be from any taste for useful employment that you are thus inclined."

Oscar's cheeks reddened crimson, and a sharp and imperious stare hung on his lips that might probably have concluded most effectually the negotiations between him and his wealthy patron.

But then consciousness of his deplorable position, of the extreme difficulty that would attend his obtaining any other situation, suddenly flashed upon him to calm down that impulsive temper and induce him to bear for the time the penalties that were then brought on him by his position.

There was a stern bitterness more touching than passion in his manner when he at last replied to his questioner:

"You are right, Mr. Bradley. It is decidedly from necessity, and not from any remarkable taste for hard work; that I am about to earn my own living, but you cannot expect to enter more particularly on my private and family arrangements. I have to tell you that it is from no fault of mine that I have left my father's house and am thrown on the world to gain my bread. I have no more guilt in the matter than yourself, nor any more to be blamed; so much I assure you as a man of honour and a gentleman."

Mr. Bradley was shrewd, if he was neither talented nor high bred.

He had scarcely gained his fortune without a tolerable knowledge of men and insight into their truth and sincerity, and a more suspicious observer still could hardly have doubted the indignant and firm air and manner of Oscar Vandeleur as he stood unflinchingly before him and asserted his entire independence and honour.

But what was certainly more remarkable still was the flash of apparent pleasure which passed over the features of the "risen man" as his young visitor spoke.

"Well, yes; I see—I am quite inclined to take your word, Mr. Vandeleur, quick. Only I suppose—that is to say, it is as well to be prepared; you know, and to be never taken unawares; and, supposing your father, Sir Lewis, should be taken from this world, of course, you would at once have to leave my family and assume your rightful position?"

"Certainly, Mr. Bradley," returned Oscar, with a half-smile. "I cannot engage to remain as a tutor when I can live at Vandeleur Hall with plenty of lands and money to amuse myself with. If that is an obstacle, I fear our arrangements will come to naught."

"Oh, dear, no, certainly not. I am by no means unreasonable," returned the elder gentleman, hastily. "And of course it may very likely be some time before it could occur, and then my boy would be out of 'leading-strings,' as it may be called. No, Mr. Vandeleur, if all else is right, I do not in the least fear that we shall split on that point."

And the gentleman rubbed his hands with apparent glee at his own excellent joke, of which Oscar did not in the least see the point.

"Well, sir, I believe I am quite able to undertake the situation you have to offer," returned Oscar, quietly. "I have not been so long away from my own studies that I can have much difficulty in superintending those of your son, and no conscientious pains shall be spared, I can assure you, on my part for that purpose."

"I don't doubt it, I don't doubt it, Mr. Vandeleur. As I often say to Mrs. B., 'Rank is everything when it is the real old blood,' and I can trust your word, Mr. Vandeleur, and what is more, I shall be very glad for my lad to have the advantage of being trained by a real gentleman like yourself. So we will consider the matter settled for the present, and it is always capable of change if any disappointment arise on either side. And now as to the details, which I think may also be as easily arranged. I propose to give you a hundred a year, in addition to your board and lodging, which is a handsome salary for one boy's tuition. You will be treated quite as one of our family, and you will in all respects share the luxuries and pleasures we can command with the money I have to play with; in fact, Mr. Vandeleur, you will be pretty well like my own son, you see, till you take your independent position in the world."

Oscar decidedly winced under the generous promise, but it was not for him to pause and comment on the terms of his agreement, and he simply bowed his thanks in silence.

"And now then, Mr. Vandeleur, I think our business is pretty well finished," resumed the host, "and it is only remains to fix the day when you will be prepared to enter on your new duties, and then I hope you will remain to luncheon, when I can introduce you to the ladies of my family."

"I shall need but very little preparation, my dear sir," returned Oscar, swallowing with an effort the rebellious pride that recoiled from the familiar tone that was to be assumed towards him by these parvenus. "But, if you will excuse me, I had rather not accept your kind invitation this morning, as I have some engagements for to-day that ought to be completed in order for me to come to you as promptly as possible."

"Good!—all, yes, that is sufficient," replied Mr. Bradley, again rubbing his hands in glee. "Then, if it will suit you, I will fix the early part of next week for the beginning of your residence here. Shall we say, Mr. Vandeleur, Wednesday perhaps will do?"

"Certainly," replied the young man, "certainly, and I hope I shall be able to give you satisfaction, Mr. Bradley. It will not be any fault of mine, I can assure you, if it is not so."

"Oh, no fear! I have a presentiment that it will be so, and that your engagement will be of a very permanent character. Well, if you must say, I will not detain you any longer, Mr. Vandeleur," he added as Oscar rose to depart. "Good day, and if you feel inclined to give me a call, or if you have anything more to say to me, I shall be delighted to see you, and so will Mrs. B., I am sure."

And with a cordial shake of the hand the gentlemen parted.

Mr. Bradley sat down again with a chuckle of satisfaction when the door closed behind his guest.

"All right; exactly the man I wanted: let's see how all this has happened to me through life, every one and everything has seemed to be made almost to my hand. It must be that I have either a very sharp shrewd brain, or else I was born under a very lucky star; but to think that now all this is completed and accomplished this should come to crown the whole! But I must keep it to myself; no woman's tale must spoil the game. All that is necessary, in my opinion, is to let things alone, and all else will follow of itself, and therefore I will give that cue to Mrs. B. and nothing more. Joseph Bradley is master in his own house, thank Heaven, and means to continue so."

He perhaps neither guessed nor cared to guess that the event over which he thus made a jubilee was less exhilarating to the other person more immediately concerned.

Oscar Vandeleur's lips were curled in a vain attempt to restrain the tumult of passion and scorn that agitated his whole breast. He was fixed as fast; he had taken the first step in the career he had chosen—he had bound himself to what might well be the most irksome life that could be chosen by a man.

Mrs. B. and her daughters might very likely be far more detestable than her sharp little husband and the hopeful pupil who was to be his charge.

And he, the protégé and relative of Lord Delmore, the lover of the refined and lovely Lady Edith Dupuy, the brother of Gladys Vandeleur, was to be condemned to such a fall and to the society of under-bred plebeians and to duties that might well depress and degrade the very spirit and soul of a young and high-born man.

It was no pleasing prospect, and for the time Oscar could scarcely control himself by the thought that he had escaped poverty and attained without influence or references the handsome salary and the promised comfort and luxury of Mr. Joseph Bradley's wealthy and well-appointed house.

## CHAPTER VI.

"WELL, Sir Lewis, so you have not obtained for me any very satisfactory reply from your fair daughter," said Mr. Brooke Rawleigh on his first visit to the Hall after the receipt of the reply to his formal proposal for the hand of Miss Vandeleur.

"Hum, I scarcely know that you can exactly say that, Mr. Rawleigh," returned Sir Lewis, haughtily, for the baronet assumed an entirely different tone in dealing with the wealthy millionaire to that which he prescribed to his young daughter. "It appears to me that when you come for Miss Vandeleur's youth and birth, you can scarcely be surprised if she does not at once jump into your arms, as may perhaps be the custom of less high-born girls whom you may have known."

Mr. Brooke Rawleigh fidgeted impatiently on his chair.

"Oh, I am sure; I really have had very little experience in young ladies' fancies and habits," returned the suitor, morosely. "All that I know is this: I have a very handsome settlement to offer, both during my life and after my death. I am willing, also, to dispose with any large fortune in return. Therefore, it scarcely seems to me that I ought to be played with like a boy who has nothing at stake or a penniless aristocrat treating for a wealthy heiress. But, still, I don't like the girl worse for not being in a desperate hurry to get married, and, of course, the delay is not so very great between Christmas and now, more especially as you say you should not wish the marriage to take place before the spring."

"Frankly, Mr. Rawleigh, and, therefore, I trust you will be willing calmly and reasonably to fall in with my views, and trust to my influence with my daughter for the satisfactory completion of our plans," said Sir Lewis, gravely.

"I hope so—say, I will probably agree to the proposition, Sir Lewis, since I like your daughter, and there are many things about her that are exactly what I wish in a wife—for instance: she is young and pretty and well born, and besides which there is something about her that is superior to most other girls of her age, and I believe I could trust her to do the right thing as my wife. Still I should like one condition first, before I am quite resolved in the matter. I should like to see Miss Vandeleur, alone, before the affair is quite settled, and then I will give you my ultimatum as to whether I shall withdraw or not from my candidature for her hand."

Sir Lewis hesitated.

He seriously knew whether he could trust Gladys in the matter.

She had so absolutely declined, in the first instance, to even entertain the proposition, and then only yielded a reluctant consent to the proposition, that it was only too probable that she would so plainly explain her feelings to her suitor that it would inevitably ruin the whole prospect.

"My dear sir," he began, "I am afraid that it will be a very useless experiment, since Gladys is so young and inexperienced, and cannot be supposed at present to know her own mind or to decide against my wishes or without my guidance. Better let the thing go quietly on and slide as it were into its course. That is the very best advice I can give you under the circumstances, Mr. Rawleigh, and, you see, I am a father, and perhaps better able to judge in the business," he added, with an attempt at an arch smile.

"Excuse me, Sir Lewis, but my mind is made up," said the suitor, firmly. "You see, it may be a weakness on my part, but it is one that I cannot get over. I have no idea of going on blindfolded, and it seems to me that if Miss Vandeleur is so utterly plastic and at your mercy she might very well accept any husband you thought fit to choose for her. If she is able to judge for herself in asking the delay there ought to be no difficulty in her telling her future husband what she does think and feel and wish—that is, if all is straightforward and above-board, Sir Lewis."

It was a home thrust, and the baronet saw that he was somewhat between the horns of a dilemma when he heard and realized the visitor's decided attitude in the affair.

"Well, Mr. Rawleigh, I really do regret it, and must confess," he said, at last, "Gladys is certainly under my control and advice, but I cannot answer for any girlish nonsense which may betray itself in anything she may say to you. And I am not at all ashamed to say that I should regret the rupture very much were any such thing to occur in our present relations."

"Better soon than late—first than last," was the imperturbable reply. "There is nothing like truth and candour, in my opinion, and I am not so stupid that I cannot distinguish between a girl's simple coquetry or shyness and downright aversion to the proposed match. It must be, Sir Lewis, or else I



shall be obliged, with great regret, to withdraw altogether my pretensions to the hand of your daughter. It is for you to decide which you prefer."

"Well, if it is so strongly your wish, of course it must be done," returned the baronet, uneasily. "I will go and fetch Gladys at once for the purpose."

"Better let it be a message, Sir Lewis," said rather hesitatingly, in answer from Miss Vandeleur. If she came here you can easily inform her of the object of my visit, and what you have yielded to at my request."

It was a hard pill for the baronet to swallow, but he, in his turn, was so resolved in his anxiety that the marriage should take place that he dared not throw any more obstacles than already were existing in the way.

"It must be as you wish, Mr. Rawleigh, and at your own risk if you do so," he said, ringing the bell. "At the same time I must give you fair notice that it will give me as well as yourself real annoyance and disappointment if you do cause a rupture of the proposed engagement. Edwards, let Miss Vandeleur be informed that I wish to see her," he continued, as the servant appeared.

In a few minutes the baronet was obeyed, and Gladys entered the room in perfectly happy unconsciousness of what had occurred or the visitor whom she would find there.

"Did you want me, papa?" she said, as she opened the door. "I was with—"

But before the sentence was completed her eyes fell on the mature figure of Mr. Rawleigh, who had rather retired from view.

The flush that dyed her face had certainly more of painful astonishment than of any more flattering emotion in its golden crimson, and Mr. Rawleigh was by no means so incited as not to interpret it aright.

"Miss Vandeleur," he said, coming forward with extended hand, "you must blame me and not your father for having thus taken you by surprise. I wished to see you without any tedious preparations on your part, and it is for Sir Lewis to explain his feelings and wishes frankly before us both as to your conduct in the interview."

"Gladys knows already my wishes, and the promise she has given me, Mr. Rawleigh," was the baronet's cold response. "My dear, this suit for your hand naturally wishes to have the assurance from your own lips that what I have said him is perfectly true as to your own intentions. I am sure you would not deceive me in this matter, Gladys, nor attempt to forfeit the pledge you have given me by any unworthy nonsense, and so I will leave you to hear and reply at leisure—only remember I am willing to keep to my part of the contract, which is that Mr. Rawleigh should not expect to be an accepted lover during the time of probation."

And with this little exhibition of annoyance, which was perhaps rather intended as a rebuke to the man who had for the moment gained a victory over him, he retired from the scene, and Mr. Rawleigh and Gladys were alone.

It was a perplexing position to both parties, most, perhaps, to the one who had so resolutely brought it about.

Gladys Vandeleur's spirit roused up at what she deemed an unaccountable trespass on her rights as a free maiden.

It was, however, only for her to submit and to listen, and then reply to the best of her propriety and candour; but certainly if Mr. Rawleigh did wish to prejudice her yet more against him it would have been brought about by this resolution on the part of her detected savior.

"See you are angry, Miss Vandeleur," he began, "and I don't like you the worse for being so in the right place. You fancy you are being imposed upon and trapped into what you don't like and did not bargain for. Is it not so, young lady?" he added, with a half-smile, that had perhaps some tendency to soften the "horrors of the situation" to the girl's mind.

There was more frankness than anger in the reply she gave at last to his question.

"Yes, Mr. Rawleigh, I do. It is more than I promised my father to endure from you, and if I had known that you were here I believe I should have declined to see you. You asked for the truth," she went on, with a more gentle appeal in her beautiful features, "and I have spoken it."

"Yes, and we shall understand each other much better in consequence," he answered, with unmovable calmness. "But, Miss Vandeleur, if you will do me the simple justice to listen with quiet patience to one or two questions, and reply to them with the same candour that you have shown in this instance—"

"If I answer at all you may be sure that it will be the truth," she said, firmly.

"I believe it, and now, then, we shall get on," was

his terse reply. "In the first place, Miss Vandeleur, is it true that you have consented to receive me as a declared suitor during this winter, to try to reconcile yourself to me as a future husband?"

"Yes," she said, firmly, "on the condition that you would visit here as a friend, and not attempt or expect any warmer tone in our intercourse, Mr. Rawleigh. That was my promise to my father, in compliance with his earnest wishes."

"So much I am glad to hear," he said, with a look of relief. "It would be a sad beginning of the affair if I had been deceived by your father in the first instance. But one thing more I am anxious to know, and it is a more delicate question still to ask: Miss Vandeleur, is there any one else that you have seen whom you prefer to me—in plain English, are you already in love?"

Gladys almost laughed, though a blush did naturally arise in her cheeks at the question.

"Certainly not, Mr. Rawleigh. I have not the slightest feeling or inclination of the kind. The only person who at all interests me is my brother, Oscar, and he would influence my wishes and actions more than any other human being."

The gentleman was as much amused in his turn as Gladys had been at the idea thus given.

"Well, I am not quite so unreasonable as to be jealous of a brother," he said, more gravely. "Though, so far as I can understand, there seems to be some mystery attached to Mr. Oscar Vandeleur's relations with his family. But that is more for your father's consideration than mine," he went on, quickly. "The great point to be considered, Miss Vandeleur, is whether you are so completely free in your affections that you may be asked and willing to try and give them to me. I know it cannot be such romantic love as you would feel spontaneously for a young and attractive man; but still I will do all I can to make you happy, Gladys, and I have the means to do so; if luxury and gratification of your wishes can avail."

The girl could scarcely have believed that she could have felt the degree of kindness and even gratitude to the middle-aged plebeian suitor that warmed up in her young heart as he spoke. She did not think for one moment that she ever could love or dream of him as a husband. But she did resolve to do all she could to save him from pain and disappointment in his unlucky preference for herself.

"Mr. Rawleigh," she said, with a softer intonation than was perhaps admissible in her voice, "I am grateful to you for your consideration, for I will try to deserve it. I tell you frankly I do not feel at present that it is at all likely I can ever honestly become your wife. It might be that I should feel I must choose between that and a great sorrow, but would it be just or fair to you to let you marry me, or expect for months to marry me, on such a chance and for such a reason?"

And she looked up in his face as if to ask him for advice rather than in reply to his pleading.

A slight, passing annoyance, perhaps pain, did cross his somewhat impassive features, and he remained silent for a few moments ere he replied.

"Yes, Gladys, if I am willing to take this risk with my eyes open you are not wrong," he said, gravely. "I only ask as much honesty in deeds as you profess in words. If you will give me a fair chance, I do not even now desire of winning your regard and confidence sufficiently to make you happy. I also promise you in my turn to claim nothing in the meantime except a right to more familiar intercourse with you than I otherwise could expect. You will give me this right, will you not, Gladys, till we decide more completely what is to be our future relations?"

"Yes, yes, I will indeed," she said, frankly. "I shall not be afraid now that you will in any degree misunderstand me, or know this subject, till the time we have fixed."

"You may trust me, except in very exceptional circumstances," he said, gravely, "and now that is satisfactorily arranged, it appears to me, Miss Vandeleur—or Gladys, may I not call you now?"

She assented, with a smile of relief that this dreaded interview was now over, and that all apprehension of any deception on his part or her own was past and gone.

"If you did but know how I despise any kind of falsehood," she said, "you would comprehend that half my terrors are over now that we understand each other; you cannot blame me, and I shall not be afraid of you any more."

"Good," he said, with something of the smile of gentle approval that might have been bestowed on a child. "I can trust as a wife one who has been so bravely honest as a maiden, and now I will call Sir Lewis and repeat our agreement to him, so that you can have no more annoyance from that quarter."

The baronet was not far away—indeed, had he been any one of inferior birth there might have been some suspicion that he had been near enough to overhear the conference.

"Well, Sir Lewis, your daughter and I have come to a full understanding," said Mr. Rawleigh, with a totally different manner from what he had assumed to Gladys in their interview, "and it is my wish and hers that the whole subject should be suspended for the next few months, during which I shall feel at full liberty to visit the Hall as a favoured friend. Miss Vandeleur has fully justified my choice by her noble and candid conduct, and all I ask of you is to let her act as she has promised in the matter."

"I can wish nothing more, according to that statement, Mr. Rawleigh," replied the baronet, coldly. "Gladys knows my wishes, and, if she meets yours, the manner of carrying them out I am content to leave to yourselves. Gladys, my love," he added, in a kinder tone, turning to his daughter, "it is gratifying to find that you are worthy of your race, and a true and obedient child so far, but, whatever Mr. Rawleigh may think, I shall certainly wait the result before I finally make my arrangements or form my judgment in the matter. Now, if you wish, we will excuse your father's presence," he continued, with a bow as dignified and formal as would have become a sovereign giving leave to an attendant to quit his presence.

The girl gladly obeyed, and, with a timid extension of her hand to her suitor and a courtesy to her father, she passed rapidly from the room.

"Well, Sir Lewis, so far so good," observed Mr. Rawleigh, relapsing into the spirit of commonplace style from which he had been raised by the very force of his late feelings; "and I shall try to observe a judicious moderation in my visits to the Hall, so you need not fancy I am at all sinking the business if I do not come as often as you might expect. Meanwhile I advise you to leave that fine creature of yours as much as possible alone. Don't worry her, that is my advice. There are horses that will be guided by a silken rein who would kick at a hard bit, and if I am not mistaken there is something of that spirit in Miss Vandeleur. You have not been too successful with your son, if report speaks truth, so it is best to try a different tack with your daughter. And now that all is settled I will wish you good day."

And the plain-spoken suitor coolly departed, almost before Sir Lewis had presence of mind to ring the bell for the servant to attend him to the door.

"Take his advice!" repeated the baronet to himself, with an angry answer; "yes, so far as it suits me. But he will find a different tone when once Gladys is off my hands. Then I shall be free to gratify my real wishes for my Wenna's advancement. I can offer fortitude enough to justify any man in such a marriage and she is a splendid creature, with talent and strength enough for a queen. And to my taste she is far handsomer than Gladys, and—and she is my own, my very own and undisputed child."

Gladys repaired to her usual morning-room without seeking the solitude that she knew was not healthful in her present frame of mind.

She had made her decision. She had said and heard all that could be of any avail in the actual state of her affairs, and her wisest course was no doubt to dismiss all doubts and regrets, and occupy herself as much as possible till the time arrived for her final answer to her singular and unwelcome suitor.

Wenna was there as usual, a newspaper in her hand, which seemed to possess some tidings of remarkable interest, to judge from her glowing cheeks and eager eyes.

"Look, Gladys," she exclaimed, as her sister entered. "There is something to be proud of in a relative like that. If it was but Oscar, I really think I should go in myself for a regular remonstrance to papa on his behalf. But, dear me, he never has done anything to warrant it, so far as I know; he is but a poor-spirited dependent on his mother's relations."

Gladys did not reply; she knew full well that it was a hopeless subject between her sister and herself; a sort of chronic difference of opinion, which only some powerful force could alter, and she was weary of argument when it did but produce angry feeling and bitterness. So she quietly took the paper and read the paragraph pointed out by Wenna.

"We have much pleasure in recording a deed of bravery that proves the old high chivalrous spirit still exists in our young and noble aristocracy. Lord Dupuy, only son of the Earl Delmore, is now on a long tour, which he intends, as it appears, to embrace far more than the usual route of travellers even in the present day. It was in the course of these travels, and while in a storm in the Gulf of Candia, that the young viscount thus distinguished himself: One of the passengers had been very imprudently

standing near the ship's edge, without any precaution to steady his footing in the rolling of the vessel, and on a sudden lurch he fell overboard in the raging sea beneath. There was of course a cry of horror, and the more heartfelt perhaps because the unfortunate man was a husband and father, and his wife and three children were on board. Lord Dupuy did not pause to consider the risk, but jumped overboard, with only partial divestment of his clothes, and after a desperate struggle for life brought the unlucky drowning man to the surface, and the two were drawn on board amid the cheers of the sailors and passengers who had witnessed the noble deed. We may add that the gallant young viscount has already won laurels of a different nature, as he took first-class honours at Oxford, and won the famed Newdegate prize during his residence there.

Gladys read the paragraph with sparkling eyes, that almost glistened with admiring, tearful moisture.

"That is noble, brave, Wenna," she said, as she returned the paper to her sister. "It is a sort of reflected glory to have the same blood in one's veins as such a gallant fellow. I wonder what he is like. Oscar always seemed to speak more of Edith than her brother whenever I saw or heard from him."

"Probably because he was more akin to the sister than the brother," answered Wenna, with a scornful smile. "I don't suppose that Cecil would have much to do with a poor-spirited fellow who was actually like a pauper in the house. However, it is to be hoped we shall know more of him some day, Gladys. I feel absolutely in love with him. I wonder how it would do to write to Edith and ask for his photograph. That might do very well for an introduction," she went on, with the sort of sportive gravity that seemed natural to her strange nature.

"It might, if you can get it," laughed Gladys; "only it would be necessary to send your own, Wenna, and papa might object, or Lord Delmore either."

"Papa will not object to what I think I should like," said Wenna, proudly. "and I don't think Cecil would be at all a despicable match even in his opinion. It might, at any rate, be a brilliant pendant to Mr. Rawleigh, with his forty thousand per annum—eh, Gladys?"

The sister did not reply.

The contrast was a dangerous one between the dashing, brave young viscount, with his varied distinctions, and the plain, matter-of-fact, mature and obscurely born Brooke Rawleigh.

(To be continued.)

## BURIED SECRETS.

### CHAPTER XLII.

LOLETTE had by no means recovered her former health and strength. Her arm was in a sling; she was nervous and easily fatigued, and by the time she arrived in London on her brief journey from Norbourn she felt a necessity for a few hours' rest and quiet, before proceeding to carry out her plan of revenge against her husband.

"We must find lodgings, Mike," she said to her small ally. "I've got all my luggage with me, you know. I shall take you wherever I go. I can't forget that you saved my life twice over, and so long as I've a penny left you shall have half of it."

"But where shall we go, missus?" queried the lad. "Back to Kentish Town?"

"No; I am done with that place, and with the name of Mrs. Brown. I am Mrs. Dalyell, Mike, and you must learn to call me so," said Lolette. "There's to be no more secrecy about me. I am straightforward and above board. I shall hide from nobody. And I have made up my mind to go back to the old lodgings, where I lived with mother, before we ever saw or heard of Mr. Dalyell. I am going to begin all over again at the very point I left off at then, when we left that place!"

Upon alighting at the station they took a cab and proceeded to Lolette's former lodgings in the little street opening out of Tottenham Court Road.

It was to these lodgings that Mrs. Flint had brought Dalyell upon the night he had captured her in the street; it was in one of the garrets of this house that Lolette and Dalyell had first met.

The girl had no sentimentality, no fine sensibilities to render this place with its associations odious to her.

As the cab drew up at the kerb-stone she alighted, followed by Mike, ascended the house-steps, and knocked at the door.

Her former landlady answered the summons.

She recognized Lolette at once, despite the young woman's blanched complexion and the fact that Mrs. Dalyell looked years older than when they had last seen each other, and she uttered an exclamation of surprise, and cried out:

"It's never you back again, Miss Flint? Well, I never! If this don't go ahead of everything I ever heard of! First one, now the other—"

Lolette did not pause to inquire the meaning of the last sentence.

"It's I, sure enough!" she exclaimed. "I'm married now. I'm Mrs. Dalyell. I don't live with my husband, and I've come to you for lodgings. Can you give me a good room, and a garret besides for this boy?"

"Why, yes, miss. I can accommodate you. But where's your man?"

"She's gone out to Australia. I am all alone now."

The landlady's eyes twinkled strangely as she remarked:

"I've a room on the third floor as you may like, miss. The third floor front is let, but if you wouldn't mind sharing it with another lady—"

"But I would! I want a room to myself. I'll look at the rooms," she continued, when the cabman had departed. "Come, Mike."

They followed the landlady upstairs. She showed them the chambers to be let, and Lolette settled with her upon terms, and declared that she would take possession upon the instant.

"But, first," said the landlady, "just take a look at the front room. It's much pleasanter than this, and if you could agree with the lady you would like it better."

Before Lolette could expostulate the lodging-keeper flung open the door of the room in question. Mike, with the curiosity of his age and class, entered the apartment. The landlady did the same, and Lolette, half-angry, followed them.

A woman, the tenant of the room, sat by the window sewing.

"If you please," said the landlady, addressing her, "here's a young woman as wishes to share your room with you."

The woman rose up. Lolette, full of angry expostulations, advanced farther into the room. Then, with a quick exclamation, she staggered back, staring at the other with big bold eyes of amazement.

She might well stare. The tenant of the room was Mrs. Flint!

"Lolly," ejaculated the elder woman, in a voice strangely mingled. "Lolly! Is it really you?"

"I might ask you the same question," exclaimed Lolette. "How came you here? I thought you were on your way to Australia?"

"You thought so, I don't doubt," sneered Mrs. Flint. "You hoped so. You gave me the slip nicely, didn't you? Letting me go off alone to the other side of the world—you ungrateful creature, that I reared from a little child and kept as my own! Oh, I'm paid for all I've done for you! But it's not hard to be abandoned by the girl I loved as my own child."

She put her apron to her eyes and wiped away a few genuine tears.

Lolette sat down, her bold face showing some emotion.

Mrs. Flint now noticed that the young woman's arm was in a sling and that her face showed traces of recent illness. Curiosity overcame resentment.

"Whatever has been the matter with you, Lolly?" she inquired. "You look ill and tired, and that pale you frighten me, being that for high colour you always was remarkable! If ever you needed a mother's care, you look to need it now."

She approached her foster-daughter with looks of genuine affection and kindness. Lolette struggled with herself for a moment and then burst into tears.

"Come, sonny," said the landlady to the boy, who had stood till now open-eyed and open-mouthed, "come downstairs with me, and I'll give you some cold ham pie."

Mike departed with her, and Lolette and Mrs. Flint were left together.

"What is it, Lolette?" asked her foster-mother. "I'm not your own mother, it's true, but you never knew the difference till that Mr. Dalyell crossed our path. Shall we make up, Lolly? Shall we, two lone women, jine together and be friends again?"

"Yes, I'm willing," answered Lolette, who, after her recent experiences, was glad of any proffer of friendship.

The pair cordially embraced.

"And now," said the young woman, "tell me how you happen to be here in London, when I supposed you were far out at sea. I came back in

the tug. You had no chance to get ashore afterwards."

"Words can't tell how I felt that first night out, when I found you had slipped away and gone back in the tug, Lolly. One of the women passengers saw you go, and she told me, but it was too late then! I couldn't follow you. I cried all night. I was that lonely and miserable I wanted to die. I wonder I didn't die! And for a week I was sea-sick and heart-sick, and I beseeched the captain to set me ashore somewhere, but you might as well plead to a stone as to a sea-captain. They won't set any one ashore if a person were dying. They has their orders and they sticks to 'em, and they laughs at people that want to go ashore," said Mrs. Flint, with a vivid recollection of what she had endured. "Passengers are of no account at sea. All the captain thinks of is making a swift passage, and his freight."

"But if they didn't put you ashore, how did you get back here?"

"As I told you, I beseeched the captain's very life out. When we were a week out, and off the Bay of Biscay, a vessel, bound for London, signalled as she was out of water. She came alongside and took some water and our mails. And then the captain, says he, joking like, 'If that woman wants to go back to England, now's her chance.' I took him at his word. He wouldn't refund one penny for your passage or mine, but he sent your luggage and mine to the other ship, and I paid my passage home, and I came back to London. We had bad winds on the return, and were near two weeks coming. When we arrived I thought of these old lodgings, and calculated that nobody would look for me in the same place twice, and I came here. I've gone back to my old trade of sewing."

"And I am going back to Bingley's," said Lolette. "I've had enough of an idle life. And after all, I was never meant for a lady. I like the old life, with the dancing and singing, the footlights and applause, and I shall be glad to get back to it."

"Where is Mr. Dalyell?"

"That is precisely what I intend to discover," said the young woman, significantly.

"Have you quarrelled with him?"

"He tried to kill me, that's all!" and Lolette told the story of her wrongs at great length, detailing the events of her life at Quarry Cottage, and her determination to wreak revenge upon her husband.

"The first thing I shall do will be to see Lord Thorncombe," said Mrs. Dalyell. "I shall tell him everything. We'll see what Mr. Dalyell will do then."

Mrs. Flint reflected earnestly.

"Lolly," she said, presently, "if I thought that no harm would come to me I'd go to Lord Thorncombe with you, and tell him all I know about Miss Berwyn. He could set men to work on the clue I should give him, and he would soon find his granddaughter. Her discovery would hurt Mr. Dalyell more than all the rest. If she were found he'd have to bid good-bye to all hopes of inheriting the earl's property."

"That would make my revenge the more complete. I will see his lordship and make him promise that no harm whatever shall come to you!" declared Lolette. "Let us join together to punish Dalyell."

"I agree to that, Lolly. And now, poor dear, let me make you a cup of tea."

"We'll live together, mother," said Lolette, taking up the old name voluntarily, with the old life. "I've got plenty of furniture down at Quarry Cottage. We'll fetch it up to London and furnish our rooms with it. We will keep Mike with us. I'll see if I can get him in at Bingley's. He could learn tumbling in a week, so as to earn his keep. And now make the tea. I am going out presently."

She lay down upon a lounge, and Mrs. Flint waited upon her as if she were servant and Lolette mistress.

An hour afterwards Mrs. Dalyell called a cab, and proceeded alone to Thorncombe House to make her inquiries.

A servant answered her knock.

"Is Lord Thorncombe at home?" inquired the young woman.

"He is not," answered the man, superciliously.

"His lordship is in the country at this season."

"Is he at Thorncombe Manor?"

"No, he is visiting in Berkshire!"

"Berkshire!" repeated Lolette. "Is Mr. Dalyell in?"

"He is in Berkshire too, along of his lordship," replied the servant, making a movement to close the door.

"One word more," said Mrs. Dalyell. "Where are his lordship and Mr. Dalyell staying? What is their address?"

"They are at Redmond Hall, some miles from



Steventon," was the reply, and the servant closed the door abruptly.

Lolette returned to her cab, burning with anger and jealousy.

"They are visiting Dalyell's other wife," she thought. "Mike said that Piers went to Steventon both times, and drove several miles beyond. I'll see the other Mrs. Dalyell and settle with her who has the best claim to Piers. Not that I want him. I hate him! But I mean to expose him and to be revenged upon him!"

A new idea came to her. She called to the cabman:

"I want to see a London directory. Take me where there is one."

The cabman drove to a large, second-hand book stall, and Lolette again alighted.

She found an old directory, and searched it for the address of Lord Thorncombe's lawyer, Mr. Keene.

"Here it is," she said to herself, at last: "Grayton Keene, solicitor, number nine, Great Ormsby Street, W. I'll go to his house. No matter about his office."

She gave the address to the cabman and was transported thither.

It was now late in the afternoon, and Mr. Keene would probably be found at his residence.

Upon inquiry Lolette learned that he was now at home.

"Tell him that a young woman wishes to see him," she said, to the servant. "There's no name. Only a young woman!"

The man left her standing in the hall while he sought his master. When he returned, he informed her that Mr. Keene would see her, and ushered her into a small and scantily furnished reception-room.

Lolette was comfortably seated by the fire when Mr. Keene made his appearance.

She stood up, shabby and low-class, in spite of her new-looking clothes, her face bold and audacious, in spite of evident weakness, but she looked honest, and the solicitor treated her politely, as it was his habit to treat all women, and inquired what he could do for her.

"I have come on business," said Mrs. Dalyell, very coolly. "But before I tell you who I am I want you to promise me on your honour that I, and the person concerned with me, shall not be harmed in any way."

"Your address is very singular, madam," replied the solicitor. "How can I give you the promise you ask when I do not even know who you are?"

"Then I will introduce myself. My name before my marriage was Lolette Flint," said the young woman.

Mr. Keene started, betraying excitement.

"The person concerned with me is my mother, Mrs. Flint," continued Lolette, calmly. "Our business concerns Lord Thorncombe and his granddaughter, Miss Berwyn."

The solicitor was electrified.

"You are Miss Flint!" he ejaculated. "You and your mother offer to tell all you know about Miss Berwyn? Young woman, I not only promise you on my honour, in Lord Thorncombe's name, that you and your mother shall not be harmed, but I promise you that you shall both be well rewarded."

"I have just come from Thorncombe House," said Lolette. "His lordship, the man told me, is visiting in Berkshire."

"I will telegraph to him."

"If you do, you close our mouth! The mail-train goes an hour from now. We will go in it to Berkshire! You must do as I say in this, Mr. Keene, or you'll find us stubborn," said Lolette, doggedly.

"I accept your own terms," said the solicitor. "We will catch the mail-train, and arrive at Redmond Hall this very evening. This will take the earl by surprise."

"He will not be the only one taken by surprise. As we go down I'll tell you, sir, why I insist upon going to Berkshire, and why I will not allow you to send word ahead of our coming. It's on account of a little surprise I've planned! I have no time to spare. I must go back now; but we will meet you at the station."

The lawyer had no idea of losing sight of his prize lest she should repent her determination and make her escape.

He hurried into the hall, put on his greatcoat, hat and gloves, and announced his intention of accompanying her home.

Lolette made no objections and they drove to her lodgings as rapidly as possible.

Mrs. Flint was informed of Lolette's proceedings, promised a handsome reward and immunity from peril, and she readily consented to accompany Mrs. Dalyell and the lawyer to Berkshire.

A little later Lolette and her party were on their way, speeding swiftly towards Berkshire and Redmond Hall—towards Justice and Revenge!

## CHAPTER XLIII.

CORDIAL invitations to visit them at Redmond Hall had been promptly sent by Sir Hugh and Lady Redmond to Miss Edgely and Mr. Paulet and letters of acceptance were received by return of post.

Upon the following Monday Mr. Paulet and his relative arrived and were received with a warmth of welcome that delighted them.

Sir Hugh placed them both at their ease immediately.

There was a magnificent library at the Hall, and Mr. Paulet discovered in it many valuable works which he did not possess.

Before the first evening was over his complete contentment and happiness during his stay were thoroughly assured.

Miss Edgely had never visited so grand a place as Redmond Hall. Its vast size, its magnificent apartments, its unlimited luxuries excited her profoundest admiration. The suite of rooms assigned to her were very spacious and elegant; her particular tastes were all gratified; a maid had been assigned to her special service, and she beamed with self importance and good humour.

"The experiment of entertaining visitors is likely to prove successful," thought Lady Redmond that evening. "Sir Hugh will have less time to think about his disappointment in me, and I shall not have opportunity to brood over my secret troubles. By the time our guests depart we may each of us have attained an outward calmness which will have become habitual."

The next morning the host, hostess, and their guests met at the breakfast-table. The post-bag was brought in, and its contents were distributed.

There was a single letter for Lady Redmond—a letter from Dalyell, briefly explaining that he should present himself at Redmond Hall with Lord Thorncombe, under the name of Piers Dalyell, and warning her against showing surprise on seeing him.

The young baronet recognized the handwriting as being identical with that of the previous letter, which she had destroyed on reading, and handed it to her in grave silence.

With an uncomfortable flush upon her face, as Miss Edgely regarded her inquisitively, Diana dropped the letter in her pocket.

"He has written to say that he will be here again this evening," thought Lady Redmond. "I know what the letter contains as well as if I had read it."

After breakfast the party adjourned to the morning-room. Mr. Paulet sat down near a window with one of the morning newspapers. Miss Edgely went up to her room for some wool embroidery with which to occupy herself. Sir Hugh Redmond and his young wife stood before the fire together.

"You haven't opened your letter yet, Diana," said the baronet, in a tone too low to reach the ears of Paulet. "Is it from your midnight visitor?"

The girl bowed assent.

"Will you show it to me, Diana?"

"I cannot."

"I will not seek to intrude into your confidence," said Sir Hugh, after a brief pause. "But I will ask of you a token that you respect the name you bear, Diana. Will you lay your letter on the fire unopened?"

The girl hesitated. She believed that she knew the contents of the letter, and that they merely threatened another secret visit from the supposed Philip Ryve. Whatever his demands might be, she believed herself prepared to meet them. She had drawn from the bank several hundred pounds in money, and it was now lying in her desk in readiness for her enemy.

"I will burn the letter, Sir Hugh," she said, quietly. "You may lay it on the fire yourself."

She handed him the missive and he deposited it upon the coals.

It flamed up and disappeared—and Dalyell's warning was unred.

Sir Hugh uttered no word of thanks or approval, but the look he gave his young wife thrilled her with both pleasure and pain.

A little later he withdrew from the room. Lady Redmond approached Mr. Paulet, who laid down his paper and regarded her with a paternal smile.

"Come and sit down by me, my dear," he said, drawing a chair beside him. "I have something to say to you."

Diana accepted the proffered seat.

"You ought to be the happiest woman in the world, Diana," continued Mr. Paulet. "You have a young and handsome husband who adores you. You have a grand old house with room enough in it to quarter a regiment. You have a glorious park, beautiful grounds, and a library which I would give half of my remaining years to own. A library with treasures not to be duplicated in England

outside the British Museum! You are rich, with troops of servants, with everything to make life delightful."

"Yes, papa."

"But somehow, Diana, you don't seem perfectly happy," said Mr. Paulet. "Your eyes have a strange sadness in them at times, I have noticed. Speak to me frankly, my dear. Your happiness is very dear to me. Do you not love Sir Hugh?"

The girl blushed hotly. Her features quivered, and a swift, shy look of brightness, followed by one of ineffable pain, flitted over her face.

Mr. Paulet studied these changing expressions for some moments and then resumed.

"I have fancied since I detected your sadness, Diana, that it had resulted partly from that communication I made to you directly after your marriage. How I have regretted what I told you then in my anger you can never know. I should have carried that secret to my grave. Has that secret any connection with your sadness?"

"How could it be otherwise?" asked the girl, with a passionate bitterness. "To know what I am! To know that Sir Hugh believes me of honourable birth while I am the daughter of a man who was hanged! Oh, if you had only told me before my marriage! If I had only known! I have imposed myself upon a proud and honourable gentleman—I, a low-born creature of dishonourable parentage. I loathe myself continually, thinking how he would loathe me if he knew all!"

"Of course he must never know, Diana! But why indulge in these thoughts? Sir Hugh can never know the truth. You would not be mad enough to confess it, and, as for me, I would die before I would breathe it to a human being. There is nothing to prevent your perfect happiness. Forget this secret. It is buried. And forgive me, Diana, for having told it you. You tried me so that day with your talk about Philip Ryve, and leaving Sir Hugh, to whom you had just been married. Forgive me, dear."

"I do forgive you—if there is anything to forgive."

"I love you as if you were my own child," said Mr. Paulet, speaking with unwonted freedom. "And I can never forget that my dear wife took you to her very heart in the stead of the children Heaven denied to her, and that her last thoughts linked you and me together. You are my child in affection. What matters your birth? A violet may blossom in a filthy place. A noble soul may be born—though not often, I admit—of wicked people. And you are just as noble as if you had had a bishop for your father. Shake off your sadness, my dear child, and forget—"

"I am an impostor," interrupted the girl, passionately. "I am not what I seem. I never rise in the morning but I think of the possibility that before night I may be exposed and expelled from this house! Sir Hugh never speaks to me but I think how his looks and tones would change if he knew all. I cannot be happy with this burden upon me. And I cannot shake off this burden save in dying!"

Mr. Paulet was shocked and distressed.

"My dear child—"

"Hush, papa; I cannot bear it. Let me suffer in silence. I cannot discuss this thing even with you. I have need of all my calmness and strength. We expect other guests, you know."

Miss Edgely entered the room.

Mr. Paulet took up his newspaper, and Diana retreated to another window and looked out upon the lawn with apparent intentness.

When she turned again to her guest she showed no trace of her recent emotion. She chatted busily with Miss Edgely on the subject of Berlin wools, and seemed utterly to have forgotten herself.

A little before five o'clock Lord Thorncombe arrived—alone—and was shown to his rooms.

He presently made his appearance in the drawing-room, Sir Hugh meeting him at the door and hastening to present him to Lady Redmond and Miss Edgely.

The earl took Diana's hand with old-school courtesy, clasping it warmly.

"I have longed to know you, Lady Redmond," he said, "since I saw you in Hyde Park last summer. The pleasure has been long deferred, but it is all the greater, perhaps, because I had given up the hope of meeting you."

"You are a very kind—and you have a good memory for faces," said Diana, smiling.

"Not for faces in general," responded the earl, gallantly, but with an earnestness that proved that he was not uttering idle compliments.

"It was a case of mutual attraction, my lord," said Miss Edgely. "Diana noticed you, and has often spoken of you since."

"Such a case of mutual attraction should result in a lasting friendship," said Sir Hugh. "I shall expect you to become a frequent visitor, my lord."

The old times when the Borwyns and the Redmonds were fast friends will return again!"

He introduced Mr. Paulet to the earl, and the conversation became general.

Five o'clock tea was served, and before the party separated to dress for dinner they were on quite a familiar footing.

"Where is Mr. Dalyell?" inquired Sir Hugh.

"Will he not be here, my lord?"

"I received a telegram from him this morning, saying that I need not wait for him, as he might be delayed a train," replied the earl. "Therefore I did not wait. He will probably be here between six and seven o'clock."

The ladies then retired to dress for dinner, and the gentlemen soon followed their example.

It was nearly seven o'clock when the party re-assembled in the drawing-room.

The gentlemen were in dress suits; Miss Edgely wore her lavender silk dress with a lavender feather in her hair, and they were in the midst of an interesting discussion upon some topic of the day when Lady Redmond entered.

The fair young hostess was dressed in purple velvet, with a square-cut corsage edged with frills of point lace which gracefully veiled her milk-white neck and throat, and with short elbow sleeves edged also with a deep fall of lace. Her ornaments were of yellow topazes, with soft and velvet fires gleaming in their depths. Her hair was fashionably arranged and adorned with a nodding tremulous aigrette of topaz.

She was a rare vision of youth, beauty and loveliness, her pure and tender face all afloat, her splendid eyes softly glowing.

The hearts of Sir Hugh and of Lord Thorncombe thrilled alike at the sight of her.

Sir Hugh came forward, gave her his arm, and led her to a seat.

"Mr. Dalyell is come, Diana," he remarked. "He went immediately up to his room. Our party, now that he is arrived, is quite complete."

Lord Thorncombe engaged the attention of his hostess, and the baronet retreated to the side of Miss Edgely.

In the midst of the pleasant conversation the door opened, and a servant announced:

"Mr. Dalyell."

Confident that the warning he had sent had reached Lady Redmond, Miss Dalyell—the false Philip Ryve—boldly entered the apartment.

He shook hands with Sir Hugh with an assumption of airy grace, and the baronet conducted him to Lady Redmond.

Before he could utter a word of presentation Diana rose up, white as any statue, and faced him with wild eyes and upraised hands, as if repulsing him.

She was literally dumb with amazement and terror. She believed that the hour of exposure had come—that the first husband was about to claim her at the hands of his successor!

And with a low, anguished moan she fell forward in a swoon.

(To be continued.)

### HELENA'S FIRST SUITOR.

"If there is anything I am surprised at," said Thomas Binder, talking to himself as he foddered his cows, "it is the way that Enos Maxwell has left his property. The all of it goes to that seventeen-year-old girl, and a thousand a year to that old-maid sister, who is to keep up the house for her. Such a great house for just them two women-folk and a parcel of servants. It's a sin and a shame to waste money so. Then to think that old Lawyer Lennox is her guardian, and manager of all her property; and here I am, her own mother's second cousin, and never so much as mentioned as administrator, nor anything. And if anybody can keep money closer than I can, I should like to see 'em. Enos knew well enough how sharp I was in money matters, and yet he never mentioned me nor consulted me. Speaks pretty poorly of his Christian character, in my opinion, slighting his relations."

"Now if I had been left guardian to that girl, I'd have cleared out the old woman and brought Heleny right home here, and if I couldn't manage such a young thing as her I'd give up business. The day she was eighteen I'd have married her, and then I rather guess that black pony and basket-chaise would have gone to the highest bidder. I couldn't now say whether I'd rent the mansion on the hill there or sell it at a good figure. One thing I do know, I wouldn't live in it, nor she should not. He, he, he!"

The foddering was done, and as Thomas stuck up his pitchfork under the barn-stairs he also made up his mind to one thing, he'd "marry the girl willing or not."

After that desperate resolution he walked into the house, with appetite sharpened by the frosty air, quite ready for his supper. But Miss "Hanner Ann" had been out visiting, and hadn't been in a great hurry to get back; so the fire in the old stove was only smoking, and the tea kettle not even humming.

Now Hannah was a woman of a very different spirit from the late Mrs. Binder—for Thomas we may remark had been a widower for six months. Meekness was not her forte. So Thomas did not dare to slum things about as comfortably as he used to do, and talk loud. Moreover, she was not "tied" there, and he had had a fresh servant five times within the past six months, and he knew how handy it was to be left with a tubful of washing and a broad pan full of dough, besides all the rest of the house work, while a seven-year old boy was the eldest child in the house. The servant-girl question might have been a means of grace to him, if he would make the right use of it. It had certainly put a bit in his mouth of late.

Thomas grunted at the sounds slapped on the table for his supper, and thought of the good old times when he could grumble as much as he liked over the delicacies which his wife had been expected to keep on hand at every meal. The memory of that wife was now always very affecting to him.

"Just wait until Heleny gets here among things," he said to himself, with a grim smile, and his green-gray eyes snapped as he thought how exultingly he could then snap his fingers at the autocrat Miss Hannah.

That evening found him arrayed in his Sunday best and seated in Miss Maxwell's parlour.

The sad-hearted girl came down to see him directly, clad in deep mourning. He had known her father for years, that was a sufficient passport to her attention. She had spent some pleasant hours at his old farm-house, in the time of summer fruits, and her father had bought many a basket of the choicest pears of his wife's cousin, and, of course, Helena could not know that the price paid was always considerably in advance of that asked in the market.

"How do you do, Uncle Thomas?" she said, sweetly, as she advanced and gave him her hand. She had always called him "Uncle Thomas," as he was so much her senior. It nettled him now though. But when the fair girl sank down in an easy-chair and burst into tears, as a flood of old recollections came back to her heart, poor Thomas was utterly taken back. Sentiment was not in his line. The deep grief of a daughter for a beloved father would have been touching if he had owned a heart to be touched. Worldliness had turned into stone what might have been a heart.

Still he felt called upon to make some remark, so he twiddled his thumbs, as he said, patronisingly:

"Don't take on so, Heleny. It won't do any good. I know just how it is. My wife has been dead six months, and yet I thought, to-night, when I sat down to supper, that I couldn't eat a single mouthful, I missed her so."

Helena's kindly sympathy was ever ready for another's sorrow, and her gentle tone and words were a great encouragement to Thomas.

"Yes, Heleny, home isn't home no more without a wife in it; and nobody knows how the poor children miss their mother. Hannah is as good as two sticks to them, and huskies and boxes them about in a different way from what they were used to in their ma's day."

"Poor little things!" said Helena, with real pity for her white-headed, distant cousin.

Thomas's face gleamed with pleasure as he thought how famously he was getting on. There is no telling how foolish he might have become if stately Aunt Susannah had not at this juncture walked into the parlour.

"The meddling old maid" received anything but Thomas's best wishes at that moment, but he waited in vain for her to disappear. He "hung about" until the clock struck nine, and then angrily took his leave. It was long past his usual bedtime. But he could hardly sleep for turning over in his mind his prospects of securing Miss Helena to preside over his kitchen, his children, his calves and poultry, and of juxtoposing her fortune in government stock, when he once got it fairly out of the hands of that crafty lawyer, Jonas Lennox. With these pleasing prospects before his vision he at length dropped off to dreams, such as visitants of his stump.

Poor Thomas had reason to realize that "the course of true love never runs smoothly," at least his suit did not advance according to his wishes. That "everlasting old maid" was always about, and even his dull perceptions showed him that she was no ally. But Helena was always kind and courteous, though she was sometimes extremely weary of his talk and surprisingly frequent calls. The quiet of a

house whose inmates were still draped with black was favourable in one way. He was not likely to meet gay company coming and going. So little used was he to the civilities of good society that he construed every kind remark of the young lady, every civil inquiry about Malvina's cold, or little Tom's broken arm, into so much encouragement. If he could only ease her away from that old jailer of hers he felt he could settle the business in half an hour.

An opportunity arrived at last. Aunt Susy was called away, unexpectedly, to visit a sick relative; and as Cousin Lucy was expected, in the afternoon, to spend a week or two, she left home with no anxiety.

Meanwhile Thomas arrived, and begged and besought Helena so fervently to "ride out to his place," and see poor little Tom, whose condition he set out so pathetically it would have moved a stone, that Helena, on the impulse of the moment, decided to go. The orchards were just budding, and it would be delightful to take a run through them, she thought, after a long winter.

"Thank you ever so much for the invitation, Uncle Thomas," she said, brightly. "You'll surely bring me back by three o'clock, so that I shall be there when Lucy comes?"

"I'll bring you back at any hour you like," exclaimed the delighted Thomas, who a moment felt he was cooing in the clouds.

"Well, then, I'd be ready in five minutes," and she donned her cloak and hat, and put up a little box of assets for the Binders, drew on a pair of gloves, and was all ready for a conquest, if she had only known it.

It was a very commonplace affair to her, this riding out with elderly Uncle Thomas, in his old "one horse shay," but to him it was almost the consummation of his highest earthly hopes and ambition. Yet now his chance had come he was slow to improve it.

He hardly knew how young men proposed in these modern times. He would not be in a hurry. She was chatting so brightly he liked to hear her. Perhaps it might sober her down to talk over such serious matters.

She sprang down lightly at the old green gate, and was soon in the midst of the delighted, neglected children, who did not see such a vision of beauty every day.

Poor little Tom was made more comfortable, and all the children rejoiced over the unaccounted sugar-plums.

While her visit lasted she did good work in the motherless family. She even reconciled Hannah to such a degree that the latter got up a famous dinner at the sacrifice of the finest pair of market chickens. But Thomas was reckless of expense that day. He remembered the extravagance afterwards though.

Dinner was over, and Helena sat in the little green parlour, culling over a bouquet of wild flowers she had gathered.

The children had been sent out on one pretext or another; and then Thomas arose and carefully closed the door. Helena, busy with her flowers by the window, did not observe that he drew his chair up nearer the table.

"How much good you have done us, Heleny," he began, flatteringly, "in one half-day's time."

"I am very glad of that, Uncle Thomas," she said, cheerfully, holding her flowers off at arm's length, to observe the effect of her arrangement.

"Just think how much good you could do us if you were only here always."

It was remarkably well put for Thomas, considering his unsophisticated ways generally.

Helena looked up with a curious expression.

Thomas's next hit was hardly as happy.

"Yes, Heleny, I have had my eyes on you ever six months, and I know there isn't anybody that feels a deeper interest in you than I do. I have often thought how unprotected you were, with no men folk about your house. Then, too, those fortin-hunters are sure to come flutters about, and how is a young girl like you to help being deceived?"

"Now for any amount of your advice," thought Helena, "poor old uncle. I must take it well."

And she grouped up her graceful spring-bowls, and delicate blossoms in an absent way, half-wishing herself at home.

"Now what you need, Heleny, is a protector, some capable man, who will treat you well, to take care of you and your property, and keep them sharks of lawyers from stealing it all away from you."

"My father had every confidence in Mr. Lennox," said Helena, a little warmly.

"That's more than some folks have," said the other, nodding his head knowingly. "But at the best he could not have the interest in your affairs that—ahem! hum!—that, ah!—your husband would have," he stammered out, at last.



Helena laughed, and answered, though with a blush:

"Time enough for that, uncle. I am young yet."

"You shouldn't make a mock of so serious an affair, Heleny," said Thomas. "You are quite old enough to marry. And the best step you could take would be to marry somebody that would do well by you and manage your money for you—some respectable man, not too young, that knew the value of money; a suitable man in every respect. You'll soon get to the bottom at this rate. You'd ought to think twice before you refused such a man."

"He hasn't offered himself yet, uncle. Swell I go and hunt for him!" said the girl, with a mischievous look in her merry eyes.

"You don't need to," said the delighted Thomas. "Here he stands," and he arose, and stood smiling benignly upon her.

Helena dropped her flowers on her lap and looked up.

There was something so supremely ludicrous in the sight of that ancient figure arrayed in his old wedding-coat of bottle-green that the girl burst into a peal of laughter which shook the worsted tassels of the paper window shades.

"You are certainly crazy, Uncle Thomas, or the funniest man to joke I ever saw," she said, and again that laugh rang out so clear and bright that the children came trooping in to learn the cause. They were sharply ordered back by their father, who, sitting down, asked Helena, with asperity, what she means by such actions.

"Oh, no offence, uncle. Only your remark was so funny, and so utterly absurd, that I couldn't think you meant it."

"But I do mean it most decidedly," he said, bringing his fist down on the table with authority.

"Then I must plainly tell you that I respectfully decline," she said, with a little dignity, "and hope you may find some one better suited to your years, Uncle Thomas."

"You don't dare to tell me," he said, in his own natural harsh tone, "that you won't have me?"

"I do, most emphatically," she said, shrinking with disgust as he advanced towards her.

It was a losing game, and the old man grew desperate. He would try the pathetic dodge again.

"Oh, Heleny," he continued, "think of my poor children, and how much you could do for them. Think of my lonely condition. If you don't want to live here, I'll sell out, and come up to your house to live. I'll—"

"Do hush, Uncle Thomas," said the girl, drawing on her dust and gloves. "I don't know whatever put such folly into your head; but the best thing for you to do is to get it out as soon as possible. There! Not another word. You'll believe, I suppose, how hopeless it is for you when I tell you I am engaged to Mr. Henry Lennox—"

"Not Lawyer Lennox's eldest son; him that's at college?" broke in Thomas.

"Yes! We've been engaged these two years. Father knew all about it, and we are to be married when Henry has graduated. Now you know for certain that there's no chance for you. No! I won't trouble you to take me home. I prefer walking." And she was gone before he could even look the door, and imprison her, as he had frantically thought of doing, rather than have all his golden visions vanish into darkness.

It was a weary evening for the poor family of the petty tyrant; but not so bad as it would have been without the presence of the waspish Hannah.

"He doesn't go against me," she boasted, though she did hint in a tantalizing way that he "acted as if he had the mitten."

Helena rejoiced to find herself in the fresh, pure atmosphere of her own sweet home again. She passed over her muddy boots to the little serving-maid, Ellen, with the remark that she might have them if she would make them nice and clean. She thought of throwing her gloves into the grate, where a little fire was glowing, because "that ogre" had touched them when he helped her out of the carriage, but sensibly passed them over also to the delighted Ellen, who wished her mistress would often take such a trip into the country. Helena herself, however, considered one such excursion enough for a lifetime.

About eighteen months ago there was a merry wedding, the chief actors in which were Helena and young Mr. Henry Lennox. It was the universal verdict that a handsome couple was never seen. But in this verdict Thomas had no opportunity of joining, for he was not present at the ceremony—in fact he wasn't even invited.

F. E. M. C.

The programme of competitions for the great National Welsh Eisteddfod of 1875, at Wrexham is

now completed, and the adjudicators have all been selected and published. The programme embraces Welsh and English subjects in poetry, prose, translations (Welsh, English, and Latin), music (vocal, instrumental, and composition), art, science, and history, and others, for which nearly 1,000l. is offered in prizes. An art exhibition on a large scale is being arranged to be held in connection with the Eisteddfod.

## SCIENCE.

**THE GROWTH OF PLANTS.**—In some investigations into the relations between meteorology and the growth of plants, Hoffman states that from numerous observations in Central Europe we may conclude, as an average, that a difference of latitude of one degree causes and implies a delay of three days and three-quarters of the various steps in the development of plants, especially of those blossoming in spring.

**ILLUMINATING GAS FROM COKE.**—To the list of substances capable of furnishing illuminating gas of good quality coke is now to be added. Recent experiments, made in Roubaix, France, have given results both economical and satisfactory, and it has been definitely decided to use the material in the lighting of the city. Works for burning cokes are now in process of construction. The fragments of coke, principally waste left after cutting bottle stoppers, are distilled in a closed retort. The flame obtained is stated to be whiter and more brilliant than that of coal gas, while the blue cone is much smaller, and the density considerably greater.

**CAMPION.**—When small pieces of camphor are placed on the surface of water it is known that they turn about with the most capricious movements. This phenomenon has lately been studied by M. Lacour (of the Chemical Society at Paris) in a number of other bodies. He arranged in two classes the substances that are endowed with the "epipolar" power. 1. Substances insoluble in water: once the spreading out has occurred, all movement is arrested, and the movement of any other body is suspended (first all oils, fatty bodies, etc.) 2. Substances soluble in water: the superficial layer produced is dissolved or eliminated with more or less rapidity, the movement is continuous. The saturation of the liquid, and of the surrounding atmosphere causes all the action to cease (camphor, acetic acid, essential oils). The phenomena is one of capillarity, or of the superficial tension of liquids.

**MUCYLIN.**—Mucylin, a new substance proposed for sizing woolen yarn, is composed of 1 lb. stearine, 18 lb. soft soap, 10 lb. glycerine, 1 oz. of sulphate of zinc, and 50 lb. of water. The stearine is mixed carefully with the glycerine. Instead of the glycerine any gelatinous substance of vegetable or animal origin may be used. The soap is then added. This is diluted with water, in which the sulphate of zinc has been dissolved to 80 deg.; the rest of the water is then added and constant kneading of the mass till a stiff and homogeneous paste is produced. This stock paste may be kept fourteen days and longer. For use 32 lb. of this paste is taken and diluted with 35 lb. of water, which is used colder warmed to 65 deg. or 70 deg. Fahr., according to the season. The solution is filtered or clarified by decantation, and this clear liquid, which has a specified gravity of 1.025, represents the mucylin.

**A NEW CARRIAGE WHEEL FOR THE ROAD.**—A new principle in the construction of carriage wheels has just been patented and is exciting some attention. In this new wheel every part consists of wrought iron, with the exception of the tire, which is formed of the best cast steel. The tire is constructed so as to protect the other parts of the wheel when it runs against the kerosene, or comes in contact with another vehicle. Neither in putting on the tire, nor indeed in any portion of the work, is a single bolt or nail employed, the spokes being slipped into their place in the rim and boss, and afterwards locked up by a nut, while the tire is firmly inserted into a groove in the rim. The patentee has likewise made considerable improvements in the axles and boss, the strength of the former being increased at the points where it is most liable to give way, and the latter possessing accommodation for about four times the usual quantity of oil for lubricating purposes. Although made of iron and steel, each wheel is not more than two or three pounds heavier than ordinary wheels, and the cost of production is about the same in both cases.

**MORE PALÆZOIC FROGS.**—Usually the venerable batrachians which have survived from the carboniferous or a still earlier epoch are discovered in solitary confinement, and in a cell no larger than the

body of the captive it contains. According to a Glasgow daily paper, however, a perfect swarm of frogs, and, what is more remarkable, young frogs, has been found while driving a shaft through sandstone in the Shieldmain coal-pit, Motherwell, at a depth of 330 feet from the surface. The manager, according to our authority, was present when several dozens of young frogs were thus found lodged in the cavity of a stone. The term young, however, can be only comparative when the millions of ages they have lived is considered. What is likewise very remarkable, as soon as they were liberated they betook themselves to a pool of water, where they seemed quite at home, a remarkable instance of inherited instinct or retentive memory. In the same paper there is another paragraph announcing the delivery of a lecture to the boys of an industrial school near Glasgow on the animals of the ancient earth. If the professor had only known of the Motherwell find he might have shown the boys living specimens of some of them, which would have been good for peeling afterwards.

## CHOOSE HEALTH OR SICKNESS.

Those who desire and appreciate health should be as willing to make some effort to secure it as they do to obtain the other good things which increase the pleasure of life. Pure water is essentially necessary to good health.

All wells, cisterns, and springs should be thoroughly cleaned in the early spring, or in the autumn. The usual method of placing a large stone on the top of the cistern is injurious to the water, unless an aperture is left in the stone and lead with a wooden cover. The air should not be wholly excluded from the cistern, else mouldy scum will predominate, although perhaps not apparent, and the water will not be wholesome, and is sometimes there may be found various kinds of insects and reptiles.

Water is the natural drink of all living creatures, and it serves several important purposes in the animal economy—firstly, it repairs the loss of the aqueous part of the blood caused by evaporation, and the action of the sweating and insulating organs; secondly, it is a solvent of various elementary substances, and therefore assists the stomach in digestion, though, if taken in very large quantities, it may have a opposite effect, by diluting the gastric juice; thirdly, it is a cathartic agent—that is, it assists in the formation of the solid parts of the body.

## NEW YEAR'S DAY IN JAPAN.

In Japan holidays and festivities are very frequent. Besides private and local festivities there are five great national festivals, of which, perhaps, the chief is that which celebrates the advent of the new year. It is called by the learned "The Day of Man," and extends over the first half of the first month—first according to the Japanese calendar—and generally falls during our month of February.

On the seventh day of the holidays occurs the festival proper, and it is celebrated by people entertaining their friends with a peculiar gong, exchanging visits of congratulation, and wishing each other a long and fortunate life. In the morning may be seen a Japanese gentleman and lady paying a visit to a friend. They are received on the threshold by two of the latter's servants, who make abject prostration to them.

At the same time a procession of mummies is passing down the street. Among these who follow it is a man carried on the shoulders of another, and a mendicant. The latter has his head covered by a straw-plaited hat shaped something like a bee-hive. In it are narrow slits to enable the wearer to see where he is going. Mendicants with this headgear are not uncommon in Japan. Playing a slow and mournful tune on a flute, they sadly pass along, asking for nothing, but quietly accepting such alms as may be dropped into the bag which is suspended in front of them. It is not positively known—still events by foreigners—who they are; but according to rumour they are disgraced officials condemned to beg for their livelihood, but mercifully permitted to veil their faces from the gaze of possible acquaintances.

Kite-flying is a national amusement, practised by persons of all ages. Not only elderly men, but even priests, enjoy the pastime with as keen a relish as an English child. Every kite carries a device or emblem bearing in various colours, indicating at a distance the name and family of the owner. A common sport is a contest between two kites. The string is made of thin wiry hemp, strengthened by a kind of size and a mixture of sand. It is consequently something like a flexible file. The object of each player is to bring the string of his kite nearest the string of his adversary's, and by a quick sawing motion set the hostile kite free.



[PERCY'S RETURN.]

## NEW YEAR'S EVE.

It was the last night of the old year, but Shafton Castle was no longer, as in happier days, blazing with light and ringing with merriment, for the heir to all this state and wealth was absent, had been absent for years, and no one knew whether he was alive or dead.

Two women stood within a lofty, uncased Gothic window, in that part of the castle which had been in ruins since the civil wars, and which overlooked the ancient church and graveyard.

One was young and beautiful, but with a certain sadness in her face, as if she had already experienced sorrow and had almost bidden farewell to hope.

The other was middle-aged, but appeared older even than her years; she often coughed, and with a deep, hollow paroxysm.

"Oh! if we could only hear from Percy!" the latter said. "If we even knew that he was alive—that we might hope to see him some time—"

"Heaven's will be done," murmured the other, in a low voice, full of suppressed emotion.

Then, as the wind whirled the snow in at the window, from the great oak tree in front, she added, wrapping her companion's cloak tighter about the feeble figure, "but do come in, dear Lady Shafton. Indeed, indeed, you are not fit to be here."

A hale, hearty man was hardly fit to be there. It had been snowing fiercely all day, but had now cleared off, and the wind was rising fast, getting keener and wilder every minute. The old oak, that, leafless as it was, half hid the ancient church-tower from sight, writhed in the gale, with a moan like some lost spirit in torment. The moon waded heavily through the driving clouds. At times, the wind would come in such puffs, as it whirled around the angle of the castle, as almost to take the two

women from their feet. At times, as when the younger woman spoke now, gusts of snow were driven in upon them.

"I cannot—I cannot," said the elder lady. "What? Have light and warmth when my poor Percy lies cold and still, like the dead there below?"

To understand our story we must go back for more than three years to a morning in March, when the whole household at the castle was in commotion. The great Shafton topaz, a gem which had been worn as a talisman by every successive Shafton for generations, had suddenly disappeared. "Who had stolen it?" was the question each asked of the other with blanched face, and to which no one could reply. At last Lady Alice Stanhope sought Lady Shafton's chamber.

"Have you had no suspicions yet?" she said.

Lady Shafton looked up and answered:

"No. Percy has just been here, and says that he has no clue to its loss whatever. When his dear father died it was put away, as is the custom, for Percy's majority; but yesterday, when you made a point of his going to the hall with you, and asked him, as a favour, to wear the ring, he desired me to have it ready for him. So I took it out of my jewel-casket and laid it on the toilet-table ready for him. When he came for it it was gone, as you know. There was no time to search for it then; but to-day every nook and corner of the castle has been examined."

"Was no one in your room?"

"No one. That is, no one except Elsie."

"Ah! Elsie."

There was not much in the words, but the tone made Lady Shafton look earnestly at her companion.

Lady Alice had a high-bred figure and face, with golden hair and blue eyes, and many persons thought her a beauty. But others said she was cold and haughty, and that cruelty lurked in her steely

eyes. This morning those eyes wore their hardest and most relentless look.

"What do you mean?" asked Lady Shafton, "Elsie guilty of taking the ring? Impossible! Why, I have known her from a child—I have trusted her in everything—she loves me as a daughter."

"Too much as a daughter," was the answer, with a sneer. "Are your eyes still blind, my dear Lady Shafton? Elsie Leigh aspires to be your successor."

"You do not mean it—it cannot be! Why, it has always been understood that you were to marry Percy yourself. The estates join, you know—"

stammered the bewildered mother.

"That I was to be the future Countess of Shafton was well understood," answered the younger lady, coolly playing with the tassel of her morning-dress. "But, only yesterday, I surprised together my young lord and your poor cousin and companion." The contemptuous tone of these last words was indescribable. "I was behind one of the big box-trees, and came on them by accident, nor could I escape without betraying myself; so I was forced to hear, and even see a little. Well, to be short, he was pressing her to accept a ring, and promising that no other one should ever be his wife. He told her that he had to go away to-day, on his travels, but that when he was of age he would come back and marry her in defiance of everybody. I suppose he meant you and me and the will of his father, the late earl."

Lady Shafton sprang to her feet white with rage. She was a passionate woman, intensely proud of her son's lineage.

"The viper!" she cried. "I will order her this very minute to leave the house. How does she dare, the daughter of an humble clergyman, even though a cousin of our house—"

She broke down, choked by rage. The Lady Alice laid her hand upon the elder woman's arm.

"A moment, my dear Lady Shafton. Let us avoid scandal, at least such as may affect your noble house. This girl, this Elsie, must be dismissed, but not on such a plea. Turn her off, but do it for stealing the topaz."

"The topaz?"

"Yes! Don't you see? She was the only person in the room beside yourself. If she is base enough to entrap your son, she is base enough for the theft. She knows the legend of the ring, that the title and wealth always go with its possessor, and that, if the ring is lost, so will they be, and she probably thinks that by taking the ring she will secure Percy and become Countess of Shafton. To me it is perfectly clear. But say not a word of the scene yesterday. Let no one suspect that Percy has fallen a victim to her wiles. See her, and charge her with the theft, and then turn her off before all the servants. Percy is away and cannot interfere, and in a few months he will forget her."

It is astonishing what power a cold, crafty person like Lady Alice has over passionate natures like Lady Shafton's. The latter was a mere tool in the hands of the younger woman.

But Elsie, when summoned, made a brave fight for her good name.

She came in fresh and buoyant, in all the splendour of her sweet beauty, and though her cheek paled, at first, at the accusation, she soon rallied.

"Steal the topaz!" she exclaimed. "Lady Shafton, you cannot think it! You know you took the ring out of its box, and laid it on the toilet-table yourself. You held it up for me to see, and I came and looked on it; but I did not touch it. I never have touched it in my life."

But all her protestations were useless. In vain she pointed out that the toilet-table stood by the window, and that the casement was open, because the day had been warm.

"Some one may have entered by that way," she said. But Lady Shafton answered that the window was thirty feet from the ground, and that no tree stood near, by which a thief might have climbed up. In short, even those who were Elsie's friends—and her sweet wails had made many in that household—were forced to admit that the case against her looked black enough. As for Lady Shafton, she had no doubts. So a carriage was ordered out, and Elsie was driven to the nearest station, penniless and disgraced.

Percy came the next day, on a last visit to the castle. He found a blotted, hurried note from Elsie, returning the few little gifts he had made to her, and saying that she had gone away and would never see him again. A stormy interview followed between him and his mother. Lady Shafton said, truly, that she did not know whether Elsie had gone.

"She knows she is guilty, and means to hide her shame."

"Mother," said Percy, "I will not, even from you



hear such words about Elsie. Heaven will yet make her innocence clear. But never, so long as you and I live, will I put foot on this threshold again till you have acknowledged to Elsie that you have wronged her."

And with these words he rushed away, leaving Lady Shafton in a swoon.

He hurried to London, determined to discover Elsie's retreat. But his efforts were in vain. After months of painful suspense he gave up the search in despair and went abroad; and the next heard of him was that he was serving in the army quelling the Indian mutiny, and had been last seen at the siege of Delhi. Then he was missed, and it was believed he was dead.

Meanwhile, at Shafton Castle, there were grief and mourning. Lady Shafton still believed in Elsie's guilt, but she mourned her son's desertion, and she would not be comforted.

The Lady Alice had returned home. The mischief worked by her had been greater than she intended; but she did not regret it; the accusation had not been hatched merely for revenge, it was one she firmly believed to be true; and so, indeed, did everybody, until more than two years after Percy's disappearance.

It was while the Lady Alice was on a visit to Shafton Castle that she was sitting with Lady Shafton in the western porch one summer day. They were not far from the oriel-window which looked out from the dressing-room of the mistress of the castle. A thunderstorm had come up suddenly, and the ladies, somewhat alarmed by the rapid peals, had risen to go in, when a thunderbolt struck right in front of them, blasting and splitting a giant oak on the lawn.

The huge tree fell directly towards them, and as it fell a raven's nest, that had stood for years in its topmost branches, was shot forward almost to their feet.

The startled rooks flew off in every direction. Lady Shafton, who had, at first, sprang back in wild terror, suddenly darted forward, for there, rolling towards her, over the hard road below, was the lost topaz ring.

"Oh! my son, my son!" she cried. "Oh, Elsie! See, Lady Alice, we were both mistaken. The rooks must have carried it off through my open window. Heaven forgive you and me!"

From that day the search for Elsie was renewed, and went on simultaneously with inquiries for Percy. At last Elsie's hiding-place was discovered, and thither Lady Shafton went without an hour's delay. The poor child was living, as a nursery governess, in a remote corner of Cornwall, and little expected to see Lady Shafton, when called so unexpectedly from her young charges. The sincere repentance, but, more than all, the falling health and hopeless grief of her old mistress, moved Elsie to such a degree that she could not refuse to accompany Lady Shafton home. In that burst of passionate grief, as she fell on the mother's heart, all was forgotten and forgiven. From that day the two had never been parted, but lived together as mother and daughter.

"If ever Percy should come back," Lady Shafton would say, as she leaned, weeping, on Elsie's shoulders, "you will be my daughter in name as well as in reality. Oh! to think you have forgiven me!"

Lady Alice was no longer seen at Shafton Castle. She was still unmarried, and probably would always remain so. Though compelled to admit that Elsie was innocent, she nevertheless hated her rival as only such natures can hate. Lady Shafton had no desire to see Lady Alice. She traced her son's absence, now that she knew all, to Lady Alice's interposition; and the proud heiress had become as distasteful to her as Elsie had been before.

Meantime no word came from Percy. Letters had been written by his mother to every possible point where he could be looked for, and agents were despatched to India to search for information, but all to no purpose.

A year had nearly passed since Elsie had returned to Shafton Castle. The broken-hearted mother, accusing herself of her boy's death, was going slowly, but surely, down to the grave. Elsie herself had given up all hope, but, with the unselfishness of her nature, thought only of Lady Shafton's sorrow.

To-night, the last of the old year, the poor mother was utterly prostrate. In vain Elsie sought to distract her grief. Lady Shafton went from room to room, wringing her hands and talking of the boyhood of Percy, and especially of the Christmas and New Year's festivities which had always been kept up in his honour.

"Never, never again shall I see him!" she cried, weeping.

At last she could not contain herself in the in-

habited parts of the castle, but insisted on going to the ruined window overlooking the graveyard, where we left her and Elsie.

Poor Elsie! her own heart was well nigh breaking. Sad memories were at work with her also; but she hid her own troubles out of sight and devoted herself only to her companion.

"Do not ask me," said Lady Shafton, continuing the conversation. "If I could die here I might be happy. Would that the New Year might find me still and cold, like Percy."

"Hush! What is that?" cried Elsie, suddenly. "Surely I heard a gate-latch clicking. Yes! somebody is coming into the graveyard, as if from the rectory behind the church. Can it be—can it—Oh! dear Lady Shafton, don't you know—"

Slowly and feebly, leaning on a stick, wearing a slouched hat and a heavy cloak, and moving like an old man tottering on the brink of the grave rather than one just arriving at mature years, the person she pointed at came on.

The wind blew his garments about him, and he had to pick his way carefully among the graves, but there was something in the bearing of the form, something in the mere step itself that made Elsie's pulse beat quick and fast.

It was a path by which no one, except the old rector, ever approached the castle, for it led to a private pasture, at the angle where the ruined part of the edifice joined on to the portion which was still inhabited. But the person approaching was not the rector, as Lady Shafton also saw, even with her dim eyesight.

"It is Percy, is it not?" she gasped, breathlessly, clinging to Elsie's arm. "Percy! Percy! Oh! my son—"

His voice rose high and piercing in a wild scream, and the stranger, looking up, saw the two figures for a moment in the moonlight; but only for a moment, for Lady Shafton had sunk down in a swoon, and Elsie was bending over her.

What more have we to tell? For it was Percy, as the reader has conjectured, and he was soon at his mother's side. Half an hour he was sitting, with Elsie's hand in his, narrating the story of his return to Lady Shafton, who lay on a sofa, in the warm, bright drawing-room, holding his other hand between both of hers. He told how he had been captured at Delhi; how he had been nursed by one of the rebel Sepoys, whom, in former times, he had favoured; and how, months afterwards, assisted by the same hand, he had made his escape and reached the British lines in safety. He told how, on arriving at Calcutta, invalided, he had found the letters despatched for him, and how he had taken the next steamer and landed at Southampton only the night before. It was a tale interrupted many times by breathless inquiries from his mother, and by anxious, loving looks from Elsie.

"I thought to send our old rector on ahead to break the news," he said, "but he has been summoned to the bedside of a dying parishioner, and so I came alone, not as quickly as I would have come in former days, for my wounded leg is still painful and weak, but when I recognized you, dear mother, and Elsie here beside you, I believe I almost ran."

Bronzed and bearded as he was, grown manlier and older-looking, the two women hardly recognized him when he came down to breakfast the next morning. Elsie, blooming with joy and love, seemed, he thought, lovelier than ever as she greeted him.

Lady Shafton joined their hands as she entered, saying:

"Heaven bless you, my children, and make all your lives as happy as this New Year's Day! I shall not die now, I shall live, I feel, for many a long year, but if you would show that you both forgive me let this dear child become soon my daughter in name as she is already my daughter in heart."

Elsie looked fondly at Lady Shafton and said, softly:

"Dear mother—if I may now call you so—the past is all forgotten—let it be buried with the dying year. We will think and speak only of the fair future which lies before us."

Lady Shafton's wishes were warmly seconded by Percy, and Elsie consented to a speedy union.

A quiet, sweet-faced bride, with shy brown eyes—Elsie herself, looking more beautiful than ever—was married within a fortnight at the antique church, by the old rector himself. A more fitting countess, everybody said, had never entered Shafton Castle as its mistress.

The Lady Alice, however, it was noticed, did not appear at the wedding—she had gone suddenly to Italy.

With the advent of its mistress, and with the ring restored to its rightful owner, the old castle brightened out into a splendour greater than any that had marked it in the best of its bygone days. Ever after, too, in memory of its lord's return, high

festival was always kept on the last night of the old year. E. G. J.

#### CONGENIAL COMPANIONS.

If I were to have one blessing and no more in this world, and were to be asked what it should be I would say, without hesitation—congenial companions. There is no trouble such companionship cannot soften, no joy it cannot increase. The poorest dwelling, most meagre fare, shared with people whose thoughts are one's own, who catch one's meaning at once, and enjoy the same things, would be better than all the luxuries the world could give shared by those who delighted in what bores us and when we are delighted are unutterably bored.

They may be ever so good—better than one's self even; but that does not mend the matter. It is a thing impossible to help in any way. What can you do if you like music and that other hates it? If a gay assemblage and innocent amusement please one, and the solitudes of a hermitage another? If this sees the ludicrous side of every question, and that takes everything in solemn seriousness? If when one makes a joke the other asks gravely—do you really think that? Yes, doleful are the hours the two must pass together, and miserable are their lives if they are bound by ties that cannot be broken.

Remember that, girls. See that the man you give yourself to is congenial, is "good company" always. If, though he be handsome, you grow a little tired of him after a few hours—if, though he be able to offer you a fortune, you can't think of much to say to each other—if, after the conventional cooling and kissing, there is really nothing between you, and you do not want to chatter to him, and he finds refuge in a newspaper—if there are no cozy times, and when you are not love-making there is a sort of dead wall between you—mark my words, you will not be happy together.

People do not bill and coo a great deal after a few years of marriage, but congeniality binds man and wife together more and more as the years go by. It is the real being in love—the happiest part of it, at least, and without it many a pair, who have not had a doubt in themselves while the charm of courtship was upon them, often wish themselves, if not dead, divorced, which is probably rather more unpleasant, especially to a woman, to whom it is indeed a sort of moral death. M. K. D.

**AN HISTORIC RELIC.**—A curiosity of historical interest has just been deposited at the Museum of the Invalides, being the armour which Charles VII. presented to the Maid of Orleans, and which the latter, after having been wounded under the walls of Paris, placed in the Church of Saint Denis. It is composed of plates of steel, weighs over fifty pounds, and is in all respects similar to that—now in the collection of Pierrefonds—which belonged to Joan of Arc at the moment when she fell into the power of the enemy at a sortie at Compiègne.

**CIVIC AMENITIES.**—A pretty piece of palaver respecting Old Temple Bar has just taken place between the City authorities and the Metropolitan Board of Works. Inside the Bar, the Lord Mayor is, or fancied himself, next to omnipotent. Outside the Bar, Colonel Hogg, of the Metropolitan Board, sways the sceptre. The City authorities wrote to the Metropolitan Board to know what they intended to do, as the building of the Law Courts had commenced in the vicinity of Temple Bar; and, in reply, the Metropolitan Board wrote the City authorities to know what they intended to do to Temple Bar. Neither vouchsafed to answer the question of the other.

**A PARISIAN CLUB FOR ENGLISHMEN.**—A new club, to be called the Athenaeum, is about to be opened in Paris. The principal object of this undertaking is to provide the English residents of Paris with a club-house and more extended means of social intercourse; also to afford a place of rendezvous for members of the best London clubs during their sojourn in Paris. The new establishment, which is to be strictly non-political, will be conducted on the principles of the first London clubs, and contain dining-room, library, reading, billiard, card, and smoking-rooms, etc. Special facilities will be given to the members of the best London clubs, who will have the right of admission, without election, on presenting their cards. Handsome and spacious premises in the neighbourhood of the "Grand Hotel" and Boulevard are secured.

**THE PRINCE'S PRESENTS.**—Scindia, Holkar, and the Maharajahs of Cashmere and Jeypore are making the most elaborate preparations for the Prince's reception when he visits their capital. At Jummoo a special house is being constructed for His Royal

Highness's accommodation. A large quantity of valuable shawls of rare texture and design, and valued at about 10,000 rupees each, have been ordered. In addition to these presents, it is stated that a valuable sword set with precious stones valued at 40,000 rupees, and a handsome gold chair, and some tables inlaid with the same metal, are being constructed. It appears that some three lakhs of rupees have been set apart for these presents. The Maharajah's troops are also to be equipped with new uniforms and accoutrements. The books given away by the Prince of Wales in India are bound in scarlet, morocco and gold, and stamped on one side with the monogram of the badge of the Star and Garter of India, which have been used on all the Prince's presents. They form a sumptuous collection of works, with illustrations—for the most part coloured—which will be highly appreciated by the native potentates of Hindustan. For scholars there are several important works, as a glance at the titles will serve to show.

#### CHINESE CHILDREN.

THERE are many curious ceremonies and observances connected with a child's early years, which it would be impossible to describe in detail. The following are the most noteworthy and important:

When the baby is a month old, its head is shaved for the first time, and on this occasion a thank-offering is made to a certain goddess; at the end of the fourth month a family feast takes place, and the maternal grandmother is expected to make handsome presents, including a species of chair for the child's use; at the end of a year there are more thank-offerings, more feasts, and more presents; still later on there is the quaint ceremony of "passing through the door."

These and similar family customs have constantly to be observed until the child "grows out of childhood," an event which takes place usually, though not necessarily, at the age of sixteen; at this period the child becomes an adult, and is expected to put away childish things. But although some become men at this early age, they are by no means exempted from paternal authority, for, unless they happen to be in the service of the state, when the Emperor takes the place of their parents, they are bound to yield implicit obedience to their fathers as long as they live. The same rule, of course, will be understood to apply with even greater force in the daughters. This is the strict theory of Chinese customs, but the practice of every-day life is necessarily not quite consistent with it.

In cases of extremely unfilial behaviour it sometimes, though not often, happens that parents cite their children before the magistrates and get them punished. Cases of parricide and matricide are treated in a very strange manner among the Chinese, for the murderers are not only beheaded, but cut up into little pieces; their houses are pulled down and the foundations dug up; punishment is even inflicted on their neighbours, and the very officials are degraded on account of such horrible crimes having happened within their jurisdiction.

In reference to some of the matters of which we have just been speaking, it will not be without interest to notice what is laid down in regard to the various stages of a man's life in the Book of Rites, a work which is held in the highest esteem by the Chinese. From birth till ten years old, it is said, man is called a child, and then begins to learn; till twenty he is called a youth, and is then capped; to thirty, he is in his manhood, and may marry; at forty, he is full of strength, and may enter the magistracy; at fifty, he becomes gray, and may serve in the high offices of state; at sixty, he becomes advanced in years, and may direct affairs; at seventy, he becomes an old man, and may retire from the cares of public life; at eighty and ninety, he becomes infirm and forgetful. Till seven the child is an object of compassion, and both he and the man at seventy and eighty are not liable to punishment when guilty of crimes. When a man reaches a hundred years then must be fed.

**ABSTRACTION NO THEFT.**—It is rather unsatisfactory news for milk-drinkers that, according to a recent decision of the sitting magistrate at Westminster, the provisions of the new Adulteration Act, constituting abstraction of cream an offence, may be nullified if the milk-seller chooses to plead that he has only "abstracted by continual dipping." In this case it was agreed that "one-third of the cream had been abstracted," but as the defendant pleaded that by his mode of selling the milk it had been virtually added to the milk supplied to his first set of customers, the summons was "dismissed with costs." All the same, this is rather hard, the "Sanitary Record" thinks, on the second set of

customers, who have to drink impoverished milk under the sanction of the very law which was passed to protect them against that contingency.

#### WET FEET.

WHAT a crowd of painful recollections are conjured up to the mind of a physician, of any age and experience, by the words, wet feet. The child which had been playing about in the morning, in all its infantile loveliness and vivacity, is seized at night with cramp from wet feet, and in a day or two is a corpse. The youthful form of female beauty, which a few months before gladdened the eyes of every beholder, is now wasting in slow, remediless decay.

What was the origin of her malady? Wet feet. Let us hope that the exposure was incurred in a visit of mercy to a helpless widow or distressed orphan. Whence came the lingering disease, the pain and suffering of that fond mother? Still the same response—getting her feet wet, while providing suitable winter clothing for her children—as if tenderness for her offspring justified her dispensing with all the rules of prudence for herself. Thus we might continue the melancholy list of diseases, at best harassing and alarming, often fatal, to which the heedlessness of youth, the pride of manhood, or the avarice of old age, are voluntarily and carelessly exposed by a neglect of one lesson of everyday experience.

It needs no medical labour to show the great influence which impressions on the feet exert over the rest of the body at large. The real martyrdom produced by tickling them and the cruel punishment of the bastinado are sensible evidences of their exquisite delicacy of feeling. Of this fact we have more pleasurable experience in the glow diffused through the whole system when, chilled and shivering, we hold them for a while to the fire, and when, during the prevalence of the dog star, we immerse them in cold water to allay the heat which is then coursing through our veins.

Are the internal organs of the body a prey to wasting inflammation, as in the hectic fever of consumption, there is a sensation of burning heat in the feet. Is the body feeble and the stomach unable to perform its digestive functions, these parts are habitually cold. In both health and disease there is a constant sympathy between the feet and the different organs of the body.

Whatever be the weak part, it suffers with unfailing certainty from the impression of cold and moisture on the feet. No matter whether the tendency be to sick headache or sore throat, hoarseness or cough—pain of the stomach, or rheumatism, or the gout—generally and all they will be brought on by getting the feet wet, or at times even by these parts being long chilled from standing on cold ground, or pavement.

And who, it might be asked, are the chief victims to such exposure? Not the traveller caught in the storm, or the man of business, or even the day labourer, who cannot always watch the appearance of the clouds and pick their steps with an especial avoidance of a muddy soil, or wet street. Oh, no! we must look for the largest number of sufferers among the rich, the fair, the lovely of the land—those who need only walk abroad when invited by the fair blue sky and shining sun—or who, if pleasure calls at other seasons, have all the means of protection against the elemental changes which wealth can command of ingenuity and labour. They it is who neglect suitable protection for their feet, and brave the snow and rain with such a frail covering as would make the strong man tremble for his own health were he to be equally daring.

At a season like the present it would seem to be a matter of gratulation that shoes and boots, every where be obtained of such materials as to preserve the feet dry and warm. Leather of various kinds, firm or pliable and soft, is at the shortest warning made to assume every variety of shape and figure called for by convenience or fashion. But we mistake—fashion, that despotic destroyer of comfort, and too often a sworn foe to health, will not allow the feet of a lady fair to be encased in leather. She must wear, forsooth, cloth shoes with a thin leather sole, and even this latter is barely conceded. A covering for the feet never originally intended to be seen beyond the chamber or the parlour is then adapted for street, parade and travel, and they, whose cheeks we would not that the winds of heaven would visit too roughly brave in prunello the extremes of cold and moisture, and offer themselves as willing victims to all the sufferings of the shivering ague and catarrh.

T. J.

**THE PRINCESS LOUISE AS A NEEDLEWOMAN.**—The Princess Louise is, we are told, a most accomplished needlewoman, not only in carrying the work of others, but in designing work of her own. She

is absorbed in her art studies all the day long. At a glance she can tell Florentine lace from Venetian, Spanish from Belgian—say, can name the century it was made in, and the possible district from whence it comes. The cunningest old Jew dealer has no chance of passing off an imitation upon her, for her quick eye tells before her hand touches the hem, and she can teach him much more about the matter than he knows himself. As to tapestries, the Princess is learned, not alone in designs, but in colours, in threads, in silks, in dyes, and in all the details of reproduction, not one feature of which escapes her eye.

#### A STRANGE STORY.

A RECENTLY published work informs us that there is a current tradition relating to the building of Duffield Church, near Derby, which is very curious. It affirms that the site was fixed upon by the evil one, and that by his pertinacity he compelled the erection to be made on the spot he had chosen.

A little way out of the village, on its north side, stands the site on which formerly stood the castle (Duffield Castle) of the Fitzwatts, Earls of Derby. The site is still known by the name of "Castle Grounds," and is immediately behind and above the small cluster of houses which bear that name.

At a very short distance from this hill, on which the castle stands, is another eminence—only a field's breadth off—on which stand some ancient cottages (behind the new vicarage house), which have seen many generations come and go.

The tradition is that the church was originally intended to be built on this eminence, but that after the work had been commenced, and proceeded to some extent, the evil one, for some unexplained reason, removed the whole of the work in one night so the site is now occupied in a field by the side of the village.

The workmen were naturally surprised in the morning at finding that their work had all disappeared, and, after solemn prayer, again began laying the foundation, but only to be carried away by Satan on the following night.

Day after day the same thing was enacted, the whole of the material brought in the day being removed, and set up in its right place on the site the arch-demon had chosen for it, and at last he so completely discouraged the patience of the workmen that they went down to the place where he had carried the material, and completed the church where it now stands.

The eminence, it appears, on which the church was originally intended to be built was a rendezvous for evil spirits; for the villagers firmly believe a "brown man" or "bogie" to be seen every night near the cottages, and have often walked out at midnight to find a dark figure standing in the field.

#### FACTETIE.

##### DIFFERENT POINTS OF VIEW.

**WIFE** (anxious about her dinner-party): "Oh, Charles! what do you think this precious pot of yours has been doing? He's eaten the turkey and sausages!"

**HUSBAND** (anxious about his "precious pot's" digestion): "Good Heavens, Maria! not raw, I trust!"—Punch.

##### BLANK FIRMING.

**ANCIENT SPORTSMAN** (whose sight is not what it used to be): "Pick 'em up, James, pick 'em up! Why don't you pick 'em up?"

**VETERAN KEEPER**: "Canst there be any down, my lord?"

##### THE REAL MOTTO FOR OXFORD.

(By an Ancient Mariner.)

"Water, water, everywhere.

But not a drop to drink!"—Punch.

**A PRETTY PASS.**—Mr. Punch's cook has actually declined to clean the steps during Christmas week, on the ground that she will be too much absorbed in "the affairs of Turkey!"—Punch.

##### A SEA OF TROUBLES.

Now meat is high and coals are dear.

It's surely not surprising

Poor householders should quake with fear

To find that water's rising.—Fup.

##### NOT TO BE CAUGHT.

**EGGENTRIC OLD OFFICER.** (to new footman.)

"Now then, Patrick, call me a cab."

**PAT** (who thinks this is a dodge to try his superiority): "Oh, no, your honour, it's not myself that'll be calling you names at all at all.—Fup.

**THE REAL MEANING.**—A man named Messenger, while stealing chestnuts, fell off a tree and got himself killed. Premature people think this points a moral against dishonesty. It doesn't; it only shows that dishonesty should be conducted on proper principles and that nothing should be stolen that isn't well



within one's reach. Never steal chestnuts unless you find them growing on the ground, or unless you have got a step-ladder. A stepmother will on emergency do as well.—Fun.

#### NOTHING TO 'IM AT ALL EVENTS.

**PIOUS OLD PARTY.**—"And now, Mrs. Stubbins, I've one important question to ask. Does not Satan oftentimes tell you that you are not a Christian?"

**MRS. STUBBINS.**—"Yes, 'es do so."

**P. O. P.**—"And what do you say to him on these occasions?"

**MRS. S.**—"Well, I say, whether I be or no, it can't possibly be none of 'is business."—Fun.

**FRIENDSHIP** is a vessel that sails along very nicely and prettily on a calm sea. When there's a change in the weather it often becomes a outfit.—Judy.

#### DUMB SHOW.—Madame Tussaud's.

It is not advisable to keep peacocks if you live in a gossamer neighbourhood. Why so? Because they spread such tails.—Judy.

**LATEST LEGALITY.**—While a burglar was attempting to break a first-floor window-cash at Wanstead he fell to the ground and broke his leg and arm instead. It is thought by his legal adviser that an action will lie against the proprietor of the house, or the builder, on the ground that proper precaution had not been taken to prevent danger. They are, however, prepared to compromise the matter.—Fun.

#### A DOMESTIC DIFFERENCE.

**MISTRESS.**—"I should be glad to know whether you are quick, willing and good tempered?"

**MAID.**—"Er—the person with whom I was last connected considered me—energetic, accommodating and amiable."—Fun.

#### SOME EFFECTS OF THE FLOOD.

**Mr. Slyboots** did not reach the domestic haven until four in the morning, owing to the quantity of heavy wet about.

**Mr. Sponger** did not return Brown the half-crown as promised, because his purse was carried away from the piano where he had placed it.

**Mr. Simpson's** hansom as a milkman was not injured by an unexpected inspection of his milk-trade, as the dilution was so utterly beyond his control.

**Mrs. Powder Blue** "couldn't be expected to pay for these three shirts as had been washed away, and she didn't."

**Mr. Hardup** was compelled to liquidate, as the inundation had damped his hopes of pulling through.

**Mrs. Firstfloor** apologized to her lodger for the weakness of his brandy, "but through a leak in the cork 'bout careless that 'orrid flood 'ad been at it."

**Mr. Beadigal** was compelled to borrow another hundred of his governor, just to keep his head above water.

**Mr. Souker** was, for once, able to understand how it was that when he got home from the club everything was swimming around him.—Fun.

**RETRIEF.**—The "Sheffield Telegraph" says there is great stagnation in that town, and adds, "It is not pleasant to hear that one large Belgian house is delivering tires in this neighbourhood." Considering the constant squabbles between master and employes at home, it is not to be wondered at that consumers get tired out.—Fun.

#### THE SHORTEST WAY WISE BEST.

**MAMMA** (to Ethel, on their way to the letter's first party): "Now, mind, darling, if you see any nice things on the table that you'd like to eat, you mustn't ask for them!"

**ETHEL.**—"Oh, no, mamme!—I'll take them!"—Punch.

#### LATEST PARIS FASHION.

**AGENT JONO** (who is proud of her classics): "Well, Charlie, you know what Paris did with the apple. Do you fancy you could do better?"

**CHARLIE.**—"Should think so. It's wrong for a man to promote jealousy among the other sex. Paris should 'ha' done as I'm going to do—eat it himself, and saved trouble."—Fun Almanac, 1875.

#### PROSE.

**LAURA** (who is still a trifle romantically): "Don't you think there is something very solemn about the fall of the dead leaves, Reginald?"

**REGINALD** (her husband, who has outgrown his romance): "Very." (Pause.) "Talking of dead leaves, what the deuce and all have I done with my tobacco?"—Judy.

In many High Church places of worship the reading-desk is formed in the shape of an eagle. But 'too' often, when the clergyman begins to read, we find that he is not "eagle" to the occasion.—Judy.

**WHAT'S IN A NAME?**—A gentleman named Robins was recently charged in Paris with being a pickpocket, and, nothing being found upon him, was gruffly ordered in the vernacular of the country

to "take his hook." The English press has taken up his cause and indignantly demands why, being an innocent man, no process was offered him for the insult, especially as his papers proved him to be "some one." Considering that the papers proved him to be Robins some one, we can't see that the police are to be blamed for mistaking him for a thief.—Fun.

#### THE ART OF CONVERSATION.

**FIRST PARTY** (opening conversation): "Ave you 'eard as Jim Bates's father says 'he'll give 'im the sack?"

**SECOND DITTO** (after pause): "Whose father?"

**FIRST DITTO.**—"Why, Jim Bates's."

**SECOND DITTO** (after pause): "Jim Bates's father?"

**FIRST DITTO.**—"Why, Jim Bates's father."

**SECOND DITTO** (after pause): "Jim Bates's father? Well, what does he say?"

**FIRST DITTO.**—"Says 'he'll give 'im the sack?"

**SECOND DITTO** (after pause): "Give 'im the sack?"

**FIRST DITTO.**—"Give 'im the sack?"

**SECOND DITTO** (after pause): "Give 'im the sack?"

**FIRST DITTO.**—"Why, Jim Bates?"

**SECOND DITTO** (after long pause): "Ah! I said that the day before yesterday!"

#### THE BLIND MAN AND HIS CANDLE.

A BLIND man once upon a time,

(I know not in what age or clime,

But that the story may be seen

Among the fables of D'Ardine),

Was wont, when walking out at night,

Like other folks, to bear a light;

A habit which might well surprise

People who know he had no eyes.

And so, one murky night, it chanced,

As gropingly the man advanced,

Candle in hand—who while with care

He bore a vase of brittle ware—

He met a neighbor, in the way,

Who, halting, said, "Now, tell me, pray,

What use your candle light may be

To one, like you, who cannot see?"

"What use?" he answered, "faith! I find

That in the dark all men are blind;

And of my candle there is need

For fools who else would never heed.

But, jostling, break—despite my care—

My precious vase of china-ware!"

#### MORAL.

How oft, in life's obscuring night,

We need the blind man's candle light,

To guide—as we our course pursue—

Our footsteps and our neighbor's too!

J. G. S.

#### GEMS.

The Persians have a proverb:—If you would be venerable, instruct your children, so that their actions may make your name immortal.

Foppiness is rarely cured; it is the bad stamina of the mind, which, like a bad constitution of man, is hardly ever rectified.

It is a great misfortune not to have mind enough to speak well, nor judgment enough to be silent. Hence the origin of every impertinence.

Of this be certain, that no trade can be so bad as none at all, nor any life as tiresome as that which is spent in continual visiting and dissipation. To give all one's time to other people, and never reserve any for one's self, is to be free in appearance only, and a slave in effect.

#### HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

**MEASURE CAKE.**—Two eggs, one cup of sugar, half a cup of cream, half-cup of butter, two and one-half cups of flour, half a teaspoon, and one-half-teaspoonful of soda. Let it be thoroughly beaten, and add the soda last. Bake nearly an hour.

**SAGO PUDDING.**—Two large spoonfuls of sago boiled in one quart of milk, the peel of a lemon, little nutmeg, when cold add four eggs, little salt. Bake about one hour and a half. Eat with sugar and cream.

**DUTCH SAUCE FOR FISH.**—Half a teaspoonful of flour, two ounces of butter, four tablespoonfuls of vinegar, the yolks of two eggs, the juice of half a lemon, salt to taste. Put all the ingredients, except the lemon-juice, into a stewpan; set it over the fire,

and keep continually stirring. When it is sufficiently thick take it off, as it should not boil. If, however, it happens to curdle, strain the sauce through a tammy, add the lemon-juice, and serve. Tarragon vinegar may be used instead of plain, and, by many is considered far preferable.

**STARCHING LINEN.**—The following is recommended by a German journal: Make a liquid paste with good fine wheat starch and cold water, and then stir in boiling water until a paste is formed, and immediately add white wax, or stearin, say about one ounce of wax to a pound of starch (the exact proportions, however, in any case can only be determined by experience). If it is desirable that the linen should be very firm, powdered gum arabic may be added to the cold water with which the starch is mixed. The strained starch should be thoroughly rubbed into the articles after they have been well wrung out, after which they should be placed between dry cloths and passed through the mangle, and then rubbed on an ironing-board in one direction with a soft rag, to distribute any lumps of starch. Collars, etc., should be ironed dry with a hot iron and considerable pressure. The sticking of the iron may be prevented by drawing it while hot over wax, and wiping it with a rag dipped in salt.

#### STATISTICS.

In 1855 the Paris omnibuses carried 40 million passengers; in 1860, 72 millions; in 1867, Exhibition-year, 121 millions; in 1869, 119 millions; in 1871, 78 millions; in 1872, 111 millions; and in 1874, over 115 millions.

ACCORDING to an official document issued last week there were last year as many as 4,488 persons imprisoned by county courts, of which number 2,168 were committed in respect of sums exceeding 40s.; 2,357 where the sums exceeded 4s. and under 40s.; and 28 persons where the amount exceeded 1s. and was under 4s.

**STATISTICS OF SAVINGS BANK IN EUROPE.**—It will not be uninteresting to our readers to know that there are at the present time at least 11,000 savings banks in Europe. Great Britain figures at the top with 5,387 (of which 4,833 are Post-office savings banks). Germany has 1,500 (826 of these are in Prussia alone). France, 1,190, Austria and Hungary, 541, Belgium, 411 (inclusive of 401 post-office savings banks), Switzerland, 803, Italy, 278, Sweden, 219, Norway, 262, Holland, 240, Denmark, 229, Russia, 68. There is not one savings bank in Servia, and only four in Roumania. There are no reports to hand as regards any savings bank in Turkey, Greece, Portugal, and Spain. The number of depositors is 11,000,000 to a population of 190,000,000, which would give six depositors to every hundred of the population. England again figures at the head with 8,000,000 depositors, Germany with 2,944,000, France, 2,021,000, Austria and Hungary, 1,202,000, Italy, 672,995, Switzerland, 542,162, Sweden, 486,329, Denmark, 316,723, and Norway, 220,429. The remaining states are under 100,000 each. It is particularly noticed that the deposits which rank in the French savings banks to 412,000,000 francs towards the close of 1872 rose at the end of 1873 to 428,000,000 francs, notwithstanding the heavy war contributions the country had to pay.

#### MISCELLANEOUS.

The "West Sussex Gazette" chronicles the death at Fulborough of Charlotte Elizabeth Gramark, aged 100 years and nine months.

The death is announced from Paris of M. Alexandre Colin, the painter, at the age of seventy-seven. He had been for twenty-five years Professor at the Polytechnic School, and his picture of "Columbus discovering America" is at the Luxembourg.

The last of the Dundee whalers have just arrived in the Tay. The fishing has been a poor one, the total catch of the thirteen vessels being seventy-seven whales, yielding 750 tons of oil.

Out of 217 private adventure schools in Birmingham, only 24 can be recognised as giving efficient teaching. In those 217 schools there are 8,560 children, while the 24 acknowledged 1,930.

A FRENCH Canadian Historian of Ottawa claims to have become possessed of a document relating to the fate of Sir John Franklin, which has never been published. It is alleged to have been sent to him by a friend who has lately travelled in the north-west.

KANGAROOS are considered perfectly acclimatizable in France; several landed proprietors have introduced them to their grounds, where they are hunted like other game, the flesh is sold in the markets as an article of food, and is considered a great delicacy.

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## NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

J. R. C.—The song was rejected. We do not undertake to notice articles received or rejected.

CIVIS.—The making of wedding presents should precede the solemn ceremony.

B. M.—It is not etiquette for mutual recognitions to take place in church during the service.

FRATRE.—The bayonet was so called from having been invented at Bayonne, in France.

MAUD.—It is not etiquette for persons in deep mourning to attend evening parties.

MINNIE.—Cold cream, if used in moderation and when requisite, is not injurious to the complexion.

MAUD.—Consult your glass. More regularity of features does not make a beautiful face, if "the mind and the soul be wanting there."

LIZIE.—Bunions and corns are caused by pressure, and the remedy lies in the removal. Bathe the afflicted parts in a decoction of black tea or aloe leaves.

SUSAN.—Blushing is natural, and subsides as the years advance. Go more into good society, so as to get accustomed to its usages and acquire self-command.

HARRY B.—Washing in tepid water, and constantly wearing soft gloves, will tend to render naturally red hands more presentable.

G. U.—A neglectful lover will probably be still more neglectful as a husband. We would advise you to give him his dismissal as soon as possible.

A. G.—A visitor should have his letters addressed to the care of the head of the family with whom he is residing.

VERONA.—You ought not to maintain any clandestine correspondence, nor in any way prove disobedient to the wishes of your kind relations, who can only have your good at heart.

DELTA.—To prevent the hands from chapping use the curd soap and always rub the hands perfectly dry. Wash in cold water in all weathers and rub the hands with a little cold cream at night.

E. W. N. can obtain the machine he requires at Messrs. White and Mann, 145, Holborn Bars, London, E.C., the best and most reasonable depot in London for every description of sewing machines.

J. B.—Propriety does not sanction any kissing between young people who are only friends, and between lovers it only allows of the chaste salute at meeting and parting.

MILANCOLIA.—Will do well to consult some eminent medical man. There are many who give advice gratis on certain days and hours. Abandon all evil practices and act strictly to the advice given to you.

THE OLD HYPOCRITE.—We would advise our constant reader and correspondent to apply to the parish authorities and furnish them with the information sent to us, and we have no doubt they can assist her and remedy the evil she complains of.

AN UNHAPPY ONE.—Be honorable as well as honest. How can you conscientiously marry the man you do not love, and at the same time love another? Better be charged with fickleness and dishonesty than wed with a falsehood blistering your lips.

GUERVAIS T.—If lovers "cannot possibly agree," they of course should not venture upon matrimony. If they can't help quarrelling half the time while courting they would be apt to quarrel all the time after marriage.

JUVENIS.—Quitting is a method of sewing two pieces of silk, linen, or other stuff on each other, with wool or cotton between them, by working them all over in the form of chequer or diamond-work, or in flowers. The same name is also given to the stuff so worked.

VIA.—The mind of woman, if cultivated in the same manner as that of man, would prove equally strong. The education, bringing up, avocation and attributes of woman are the causes why her mind does not frequently turn out so strong as that of man.

H. M. O.—Ladies or gentlemen engaged to be married do not conventionally wear gold rings, as married persons do. A ring (worn by unmarried persons) is worn in genteel society on the finger next to the little one on the right hand.

AN OXOTIAN requires a cure for snoring. The best mode to suppress or mitigate it is to vary the position in which you have been accustomed to lie in bed; but if there be any malformation of, or impediment in, the air conduits of the mouth and nose, the evil cannot be remedied.

TIME.—Opium is an insipidated, gummy juice which is obtained from the head of the poppy called "papaver somniferum," or "sleeping poppy." It is imported from Persia, Arabia, and other warm parts of Asia, in flat cakes, covered with leaves, to prevent them sticking together. It has a reddish-brown colour, and strong,

peculiar smell. Its taste at first is nauseous and bitter, but this soon becomes acrid, and produces a slight warmth in the mouth.

U. C. C.—The ecliptic is the imaginary track which the sun appears to take by the earth annually revolving round him. The moon must be at full when it enables us to observe an eclipse. An eclipse of the sun is caused by the passage of the moon between the sun and the earth.

B. W.—The black spots on the face, generally on the sides of the nose, are caused by the perspiration lodging in the ducts of the skin, and becoming blackened by exposure to the atmosphere. The remedy is to squeeze the parts between the fingers, and then bathe them with weakly-diluted spirits of wine.

LOUIS, having signed a legal contract to purchase the work, is bound to complete the terms of such contract, if the same is drawn strictly binding him to do so. If "Louis" was a minor, that is under the age of twenty-one, when he signed the contract he is not bound to complete such contract.

ROBERT wishes to know how to get fat. If he be constitutionally thin, he will find the attempt to arrive at obesity a difficult one. He may, however, try very nutritious food—boiled milk for breakfast, thick soups and rice for dinner, and all glutinous substances, such as calves' feet, &c.

PIMROSE.—As women and men are not made to order, like so many long tenns and short sixes, they must pair off in a ball as best they can. As a rule, tall young men like short young women, so you need not be alarmed about getting a partner. But, as manners make a man, so does a nice, agreeable manner make a charming woman, whatever her station may be.

## A FRIEND AT LAST.

The shadows fell across the street,  
The moon looked only down,  
When, trudging on with weary feet,  
O'er pavements icy-grown,  
A homeless child sought charity  
Of those to her unknown.

She heard the shouts of laughter swell  
Out on the bitter air,  
She heard the sound of many a bell,  
And joy seemed everywhere,  
Save in her own poor heart. Alas!  
Pain was the dweller there.

Often most rudely pushed aside  
She paused and sobbed aloud,  
While swiftly passed the living tide,  
And pleasure ruled the crowd.  
Alas! that one poor heart like hers  
With grief should there be bowed.

Beauty in richest silks trailed by  
With diamonds dazzling bright;  
Her heart seemed dead to charity  
And filled with cold delight:  
She could not heed the plaintive cry  
Of woe that festal night.

But hush! became that pleading tone  
While yet the crowd surged past,  
And when the morning light came down  
And round its glory cast,  
The silent, worn-out, lifeless one,  
Had found a friend at last.

C. A.

SCARLETT, twenty-three, medium height, dark hair and eyes, in a good position, wishes to correspond with a young lady.

FAIR ETT, twenty-four, grey, twenty, and FAIR T, twenty-four, wish to correspond with three respectable mechanics about their own age, of loving dispositions and fond of home.

FAIR BEAD, good looking, very respectable, and would make a loving husband, would like to correspond with a handsome young lady, who must be loving, and one with money preferred.

HAPPY ELIZABETH, twenty, medium height, dark hair and eyes, considered good looking, wishes to correspond with a good looking young man with a view to matrimony.

ETHEL B., seventeen, medium height, light brown hair, fair complexion, good tempered and very fond of home, wishes to correspond with a tall, dark young man with a view to matrimony.

LOVING ANNIE, nineteen, tall, considered good looking, fond of singing and dancing, wishes to correspond with a brave young sailor, captain preferred; goodness of heart preferred to good looks or money.

HAPPY EMILY, twenty-two, medium height, fair hair and eyes, considered good looking, would like to correspond with a good looking young man with a view to matrimony.

E. F., eighteen, medium height, dark hair and eyes, considered good looking and fond of dancing, would like to correspond with a good looking young man with a view to matrimony.

ROB ROY, thirty, and considered good looking, would like to correspond with a young lady, not over twenty-one, who has dark hair and eyes, is good looking and musical; an actress preferred.

NIDIE W., twenty, fair, loving, and considered good looking, wishes to correspond with a dark gentleman, who must be loving, good tempered and true.

A Z., thirty, who has a small private income, and is at present employed as foreign correspondent at a wholesale manufactory, wishes to correspond with a respectable young lady with a view to matrimony.

M. B. P., twenty, medium height, good tempered, blue eyes, fond of home, wishes to correspond with a respectable young lady about twenty, with a view to matrimony.

K. C. wishes to correspond with a fair gentleman about twenty-three, who must be of a good family, good looking, musical, and of a very lively and amiable disposition.

GILLY BOOBY, a steward in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with a fair young lady about twenty-two, with a view to matrimony; he is fair and considerably good looking, can play an instrument from a Jew's harp

to a barrel-organ, has a small private income and is fond of home comforts.

ALICE, eighteen, medium height, fair, good looking and of a loving disposition, wishes to correspond with a young gentleman; respondent must be fond of home and music.

BESSIE, eighteen, medium height, fresh complexion, blue eyes, of a loving disposition, and in a good position, wishes to correspond with a dark young gentleman with a view to matrimony.

BEACH, twenty, medium height, a good housekeeper and fond of home, would like to correspond with a respectable business man with a view to matrimony; a widower preferred.

KATE C., twenty, tall, brown hair and eyes, thoroughly domesticated, wishes to correspond with a respectable mechanic; respondent must be tall, dark and good tempered.

F. W., twenty-four, dark complexion, rather tall, in a good position, would like to correspond with an educated young lady, who is fond of home, domesticated, and of a loving disposition.

FRED M., thirty, a widower, would like to correspond with a loving, thoroughly domesticated person, who would make a comfortable home, with a view to matrimony.

## COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

THOMAS B. is responded to by—Miss F.

ROBERT by—Annie Louise, twenty-two, dark, very affectionate and domesticated.

JAMES by—Marie, seventeen, fair, and very passable in appearance.

GEORGE by—Hope, who is dark, thoroughly domesticated, fond of home, of a cheerful disposition, and would make a good wife.

C. H. C. by—Lurline, eighteen, 5ft. 5in., fair, light hair, dark eyes, well connected and educated, and has an independence.

R. W. by—Lily D., seventeen, fair, good looking, respectably connected, in view of good prospects when she comes of age, and thinks she is all that he could desire.

R. S. by—Little Brown Eyes, who is tall, musical and thoroughly domesticated.

ANNA by—T. K., who is twenty-one and holds a respectable position.

ALPHONSE by—Little Brown Eyes, who is tall, with long brown hair and brown eyes, musical, thoroughly domesticated, and would make a good wife to a good husband.

JERRY by—George J., twenty-two, 5ft. 11in., fair, considered good looking, in a very good position, accomplished, and thinks that he is all she requires.

ETHEL MAUD by—J. F. T., twenty-three, fair, considered good looking, good tempered and sober, in the Marine, and has a private income.

TOM by—A Loving Heart, twenty-three, medium height, dark hair and eyes, and thinks that she will meet his requirements.

A. B. by—Neil, twenty-two, medium height, and thinks she is all he requires.

LOVING ELMINA by—Happy Jack, 5ft. 7in., good looking, fond of home and music, and will do all he can to make a wife comfortable.

LAURA B. by—Alfred G., twenty-three, dark hair, blue eyes.

VIOLET D. by—Ernest, twenty-five, medium height, fond of home, of a cheerful disposition, and thinks he would suit her.

MAIR BRAC by—Maude M., who is dark and thinks she is all he requires.

W. N. by—M. J. B., who is between sixteen and seventeen, fair, rather tall, considered handsome, pretty flaxen hair and large blue eyes, very amiable and sweet tempered, very respectably connected, being a farmer's daughter, and when of age will have a small income.

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